

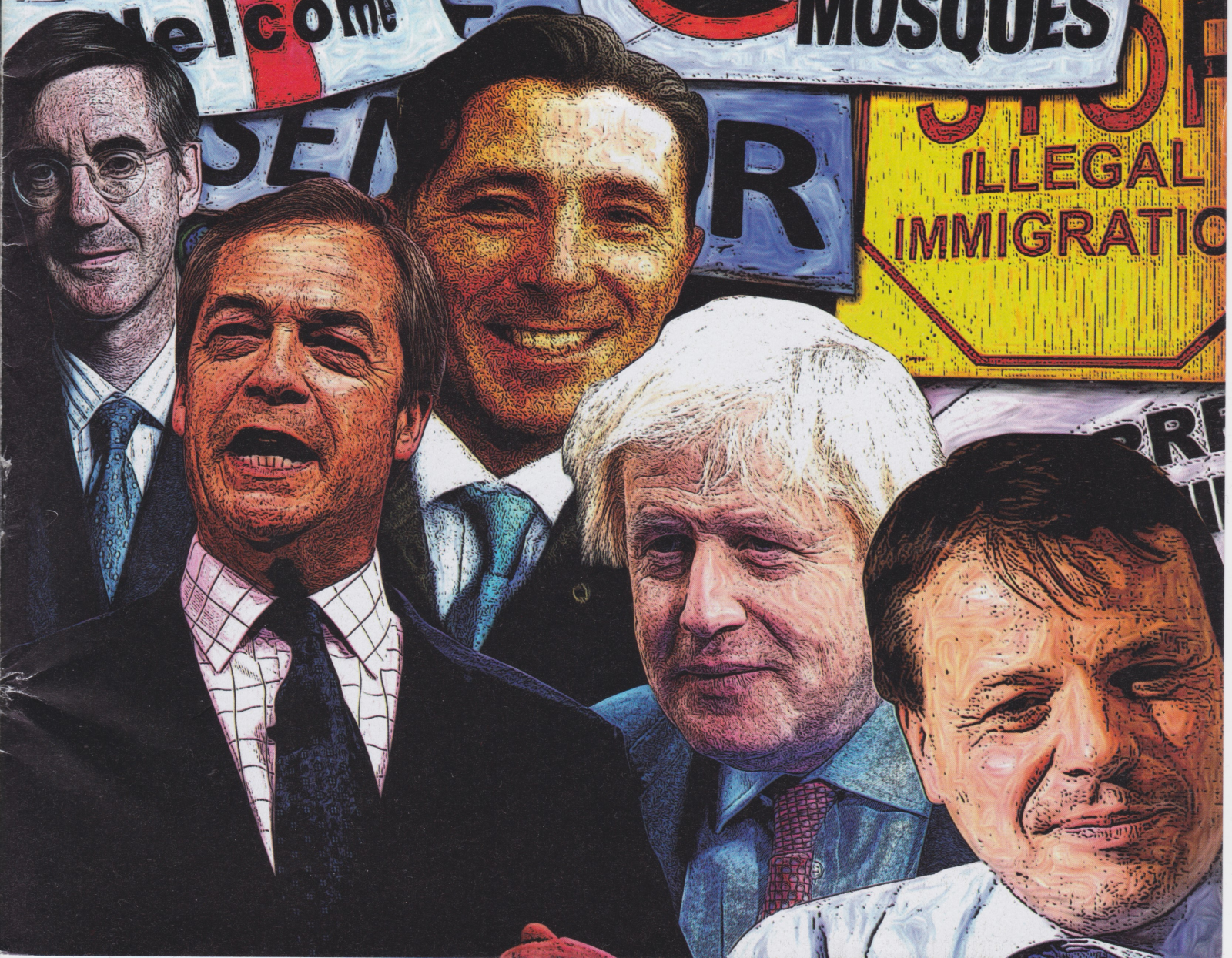
H O P E

Providing a positive
antidote to hate
and intolerance
September-October 2018
Issue no. 36
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MAY'S MILITANT TENDENCY



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**HATE
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HATE**

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on hate groups and community
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LISTENING, TALKING AND ENGAGING

MUCH OF THIS ISSUE focuses on how HOPE not hate approaches its work. In an increasingly polarised society, where social liberals and authoritarians have little in common with anti-immigration authoritarians, and even less of a desire to engage with one another, HOPE not hate believes our priority has to be about engagement.

As we describe on page 15, HOPE not hate is setting up a Difficult Conversations training lab so we can equip activists, community groups, union stewards and statutory agencies with the skills to listen and engage with people with different views. On page 17, we learn about plans to expand our schools project, which has been one of our great developments over the past year. Influencing much of our new work has been the experiences and lessons learnt from the 60 citizens panels and 12 Brexit focus groups that Rosie Carter (p28) has run over the past 18 months. Finally, on page seven we hear about a return to our localised ward level leaflets which proved so effective in the 2000s.

With calls for a revival of the Anti-Nazi League, it is vitally important we think about strategy and tactics. In an essay that I've written (p20), I explore the issues and tactics I believe any new group should organise around. On page 24, my colleague Joe Mulhall brilliantly explains how demonstrations must be seen as a tactic and not a necessity. As Joe reminds us, "counter-protests are inherently reactive. It also means the far right are always setting the agenda and

defining the issues around which we issues around which we will fight."

Fundamentally though, our priority has to be to engage with the 40% of Britons who feel politically and culturally different to ourselves and to do that we have to genuinely understand their anger, show empathy and offer real solutions to their problems. It also means that we need to be prepared to compromise and moderate our own views in order to find the common ground that we can all feel comfortable in.

ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

This edition of HOPE not hate makes no mention of the National Action trial that saw one man plead guilty for plotting to murder a Labour MP and a police officer and two leading members of National Action jailed based on information from a source inside the organisation. This is because our evidence will also be used in another trial and so it is all now sub-judice.

AN APOLOGY

Finally, I would like to offer an apology for the very long gap since our last issue. We prepared one for May but then preparations for the National Action trial meant this was delayed and eventually scrapped. Then we had a special issue prepared for the end of the trial, but reporting restrictions meant we were not able to publish it.

Hopefully now, with this issue, we are back on track and HOPE not hate will be coming out every two months as planned. ■

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HNH uses research, education and public engagement to challenge mistrust and racism, and helps to build communities that are inclusive, celebrate shared identities and are resilient to hate.

Initially established to counter the electoral rise of the BNP, HOPE not hate mobilises communities by providing a positive alternative to the politics of hate. HOPE not hate has over 214,000 online supporters and over 240,000 followers on Facebook. We are not aligned to any political party and will work with everyone wherever possible.

HOPE not hate comprises HOPE not hate Ltd and our charitable wing, HOPE not hate Charitable Trust.

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Generation Identity UK suffers split after Nazi revelations

From the Right Response Team

LEADER OF THE UK BRANCH of the far-right group Generation Identity, Tom Dupré, has quit after key organiser Tore Johan Rasmussen's nazi past was revealed.

Generation Identity (GI)'s summer camp in France didn't turn out quite as the far-right movement had hoped.

Instead of establishing a strategy for the coming year, the pan-European movement left the weekend bruised. After *The Observer* contacted activists at the camp for comment on the fact that Tore Rasmussen, a central figure in the UK branch, had a history in the Norwegian nazi scene, co-leader Tom Dupré abruptly left the movement, striking a major blow against GI UK. The organisation lacks other capable leaders, and it remains to be seen whether the UK branch can survive without Dupré.

NAZI PAST

Dupré's departure came after the revelation that Rasmussen had been active in the Norwegian nazi group Vigrid in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Norwegian watchdog group Monitor described Rasmussen as a "well-known nazi" in 2001. It has been reported that Rasmussen was one of a group of nazis handing out flyers bearing the call to "save the white race", with further information about hearing American nazi William Pierce "talk about the Jews". Rasmussen also used to attend matches of the Oslo football club Vålerenga alongside figures active in



Tore Rasmussen and Martin Sellner in Vienna, Austria 2018

the Norwegian extreme right. Vigrid leader Tore Tvedt has recently stated that he is "proud" of Rasmussen, referring to him as his "lieutenant".

Rasmussen, who became a key organiser in GI UK last summer, was banned from entering the UK earlier this year. He instead moved to Ireland and started managing the European de facto leader Martin Sellner's clothing brand Phalanx Europa.

Rasmussen has not been completely honest about his past to followers of GI. Despite Rasmussen's far-right activism starting at least 15 years earlier, Rasmussen claims in a YouTube video from May 2018 that he was "red-pilled" (converted to far-right views) in 2015 in the wake of the refugee crisis, stating that before this time he lived "in a golden cage of fear afraid to speak my mind about whatever the media would define as controversial".

When questioned Rasmussen has briefly mentioned his nazi involvement in Norwegian language interviews, but it's clear that he has downplayed the extent of his involvement, and also the violent aspects of the movement he was involved in. In 2001, members of Vigrid were convicted

for a horrific attack against two men of immigrant backgrounds outside of a nightclub in Stavanger, throwing a cobblestone and stabbing one of the men six times, puncturing his lung. In total seven of the eight accused nazis were convicted, among those Tommy Olsen, now active in the Nordic Resistance Movement.

Whilst Rasmussen claims to have completely severed all ties with Vigrid, there are several articles on Vigrid's website discussing Rasmussen and GI, including an article written by Tore Tvedt, the founder and leader of the organisation, congratulating Rasmussen on his position in GI. Tvedt also states that he is proud of his "lieutenant", going on to write of Rasmussen and a fellow activist:

They have like many others followed the advice I gave them about distancing themselves and asking for forgiveness for their activism in Vigrid when the pressure got too heavy. And then, after some time, again taken on leading positions elsewhere. It shows wisdom, ability to learn and adapt.

In the wake of his exposure, Rasmussen has announced that he is moving from Ireland back to Norway. GI Ireland and Northern Ireland branch

published a statement saying that "Tore is a great patriot and friend and we wish him well".

QUESTIONS FOR GI

Questions are now raised over how much was known by the UK branch and the international leadership, including Sellner. Benjamin Jones, GI UK's co-leader, told the Independent that Rasmussen had "wiped his hands clean of youthful misjudgements". But that view clearly wasn't shared among the whole group. Dupré stated to the Independent:

I find Nazism disgusting, I find that kind of violence horrendous as well and I'm just not going anywhere near that ... to some extent the success or failure of groups [like GI] rests on how well we can keep these people out. I thought we had but clearly not, and that's why I left.

GI's core ideology is racist and has long attracted people from the extreme fringes. HOPE not hate have exposed GI UK activists for having previously been active in National Action, now banned in the UK as a terrorist group. This is just further evidence that GI's claims not to be racist or ideologically extreme are untenable.

LAMP: Shining a light on anti-Muslim hatred

Safya Khan-Ruf

HOPE not hate is launching a fortnightly e-newsletter to monitor, analyse and challenge anti-Muslim hatred.

Entitled LAMP, Light on anti-Muslim hatred, this e-newsletter will launch in mid-September and will investigate societal attitudes, the impact of laws and discrimination on Muslims, the drivers behind the hate, and share good practice and policy initiatives.

While the primary focus will be on the UK, the newsletter will also examine developments across Europe and North America.

HOPE not hate has been a front runner in challenging anti-Muslim hate, producing its first Counter-Jihad report in 2012, which explored the under-researched emergent conspiratorial ideology. The full time monitoring of anti-Muslim individuals and organisations allow HOPE not hate to contribute exclusive information to the field of

structural Islamophobia.

Data published in HOPE not hate's 2017 Fear and HOPE report also shows a clear hardening of Islamophobic attitudes among those more sceptical about modern society in Britain.

The survey of 4,000 people showed 39% of people overestimate the proportion of Muslims in the British population, a quarter of English people believe that Islam is a dangerous religion that incites violence and nearly half say their suspicion of Muslims has increased following the recent terror attacks.

More recent HOPE not hate polling, including a survey of 15,000 voters this summer, confirm the worsening of public attitudes towards British Muslims and Islam more generally.

The national conversation on immigration, which we have jointly run with British Future, has also found that views on immigration are

often shaped by perceptions and anxieties around integration.

No longer does one have to stand in a fenced-off car park at an anti-Muslim street demonstration to hear of a conspiratorial plot to 'flood' Europe with Muslims, when markedly similar ideas are being articulated by journalists, politicians and even prime ministers of member states of the European Union.

The flood of fearmongering regarding Muslims requires a strong response.

LAMP aims to provide a sober and accurate reflection on anti-Muslim hatred today. We hope LAMP will be a valuable tool for all those who seek to understand, analysis and – ultimately – reduce this pernicious prejudice.

To receive LAMP, please sign up at www.hopenothate.org.uk

HOPE not hate to produce localised newsletters

AS PART of our strategy to engage in local communities, HOPE not hate will produce a series of regular newsletters for key areas of the country that are most vulnerable to racist and anti-Muslim messages.

These areas include Burnley, Bradford, Stoke-on-Trent, Dudley, Sheffield and Thurrock.

In a revival of the localised material we produced in the 2000s, to counter the threat from the British National Party, these quarterly newsletters will allow us to build a connection with local communities, engage and address issues that are being exploited by hate groups and build a local HOPE not hate network.

One of the first newsletters will be in Hapton-with-Park, in Burnley, where the BNP, and later UKIP, have won 10

council elections in the past 14 years.

"Hapton-with-Park was the BNP's safest council seat," remembers local HOPE not hate organiser Jason Hunter. "We managed to turn the tide by producing regular local newsletters. With it being the only council seat in

the country that UKIP has won in both of the last two years, we need to repeat the process again."

If these newsletters prove successful HOPE not hate hopes to replicate this initiative in other parts of the country.



Homegrown Terror

**By Ulli Jentsch for
apabiz in Berlin**

THE SAXON CITY OF CHEMNITZ has been the flashpoint of an exceptionally dangerous and virulent racist mobilisation since 25 August. The near-pogrom atmosphere in the city was ignited by the shocking and meaningless death of a 35-year-old man fatally injured, by stab wounds, on the fringes of the annual City Festival.

The desire expressed by the family and friends of the deceased man, Daniel H., that “grief should not turn into anger and hatred” has not been fulfilled because his tragic death was immediately exploited by the right in Saxony’s third largest city – with 250,000 inhabitants – for its own nefarious anti-refugee purposes. That Daniel H. himself was opposed to right-wing parties and racism and that he came from a German-Cuban family were things the fanatical racists did not care about.

Just a day after Daniel’s death, before reliable details were known, both the far right populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) and a local so-called “ultras” group of football fans were shrieking for undefined “protests”.

At that stage about 800 people responded to the fan group’s call but rapidly a violent and racist crowd called for the city to be “recaptured” and roving groups of racists repeatedly attacked individuals they identified as migrants or refugees. The police, with a mere fifty officers deployed, signally failed to hold back the rampaging and uncontrolled mob.

On social media, extreme right-wing accounts with high outreach reported – from information evidently leaked by police officers – that the two suspects

for the killing, a Syrian and an Iraqi, had been arrested and branded them as examples of migrant crime against Germans, summed up in the buzzword “knifemigration”. An alleged previous case of sexist harassment was invented to complete the tale of horror.

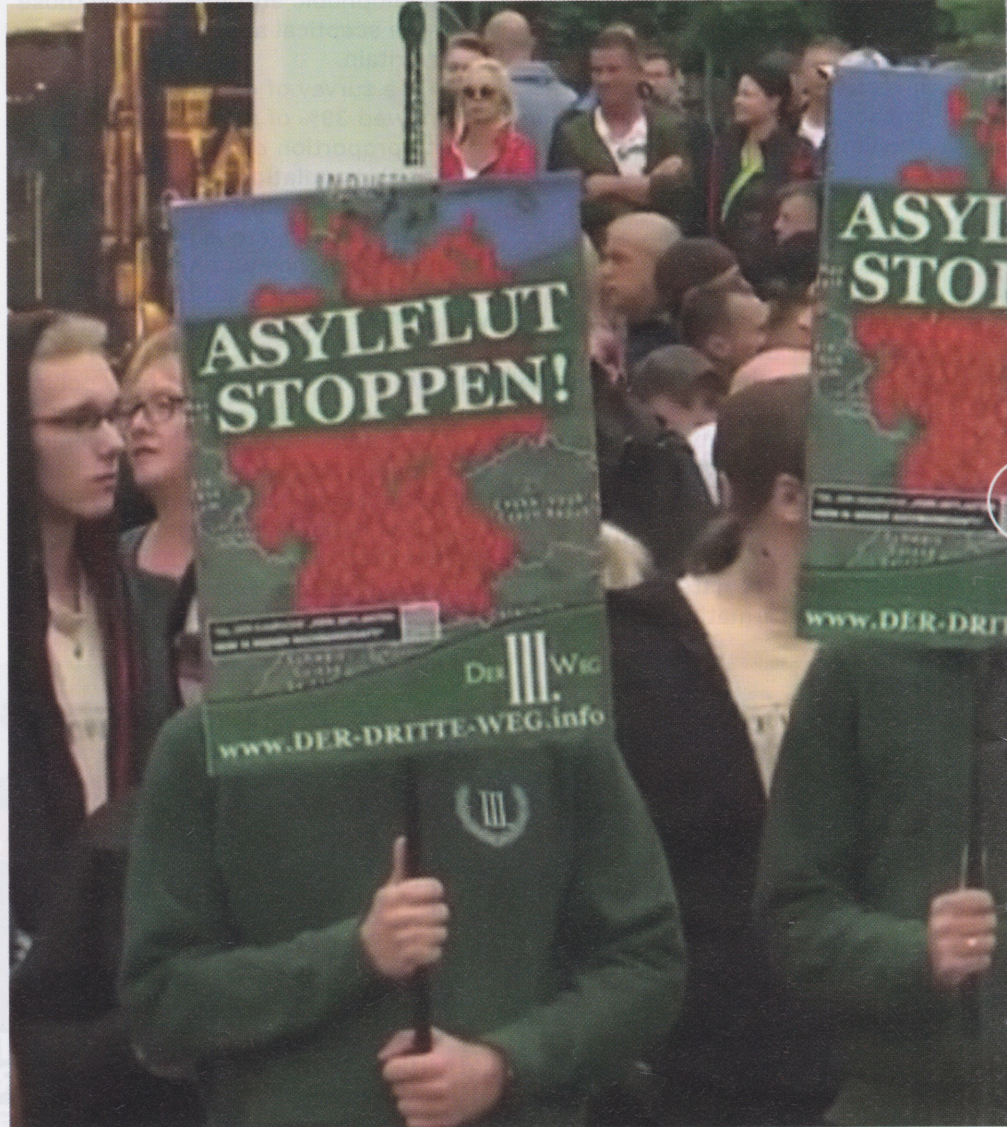
A day later, a nationwide rally and demonstration followed, organised by Pro Chemnitz, an extreme right-wing racist group represented on the local council.

More than 6,000 subsequently people gathered in Chemnitz’s central square

under the giant Karl Marx monument, many masked, very aggressive and screaming slogans like “The National Resistance is marching here” and “Germany for the Germans – foreigners out!”

The police were again unable and unwilling to stop the Hitler salutes, death threats to journalists and violent attacks on counter-demonstrators.

The ghoulis images of Monday 27 August depict a violent, hateful, vengeful mob of nazis and “normal” racists, the scent of blood in their nostrils,



comes to Chemnitz



completely indifferent to and oblivious to any notion of mourning for the victim. It became crystal clear in Chemnitz, in that precise moment, that all potential victims of the nazis had good reason to fear for life and limb.

Since then, the wider public has been busily discussing the factors are responsible for this dynamic of disgrace. From the extreme right, the obvious facts are denied, right up to the multiply filmed Hitler salutes, and summarily declared “fake news”. As to the venomously anti-migrant AfD, it

smartly presented the repulsive events in Chemnitz in the German federal parliament, the Bundestag, as some kind of understandable and legitimate self-defence by Germans against “foreigner criminality”.

The right-wing rampages in Chemnitz have shown that the entire extreme right-wing, racist and openly nazi milieu, despite their internal contradictions, are ready for a public showdown. They can now function together and can mobilise several generations of extreme right-wing activists.

Added to this is the behaviour of politicians, authorities and, especially, the police, who have consistently downplayed and dismissed this growing development for years.

The groups now crying out for violence are trivialised as “concerned citizens” but the threat posed by them to refugees, especially those labelled as “traitors to the people”, is not adequately recognised or only reluctantly cracked down on. This scandalous situation is rightly perceived as complicity in the face of the current disorder.

It will be important to support anti-racists in Chemnitz with all our might in the coming weeks and months. Everything that blocks the racist stampede and increases protection and security for all potential victims of the “German mob” is important.

Looking to next year’s regional elections in Saxony, there is great apprehension that the latest riots could determine the election’s outcome. The AfD’s support stands at 25% in the state, making the party the second strongest force.

This AfD openly sides with “the worried citizens” and is driving the Christian Democrats (CDU) even further to the right. Many observers are now thinking the hitherto unthinkable: that the AfD could end up ruling or co-ruling Saxony.

As long as the currently self-confident nazis are publicly on the side of AfD politicians and right-wing agitators and the state authorities not only back away but, in part, also display open sympathy with the mob, it is a major task for the anti-fascist movement to help turn the tide. ■

'Ctrl Alt-Right Delete' hits Washington DC

By Nick Ryan

ON THURSDAY 28 June, HOPE not hate brought together activists, researchers, and politicians for the first ever **Ctrl Alt-Right Delete** conference, in Washington D.C.

Ctrl Alt-Right Delete is the newsletter run by Melissa Ryan, in partnership with HOPE not hate, devoted to understanding how the 'alt-right' movement operates online and to developing strategies to fight back against its influence.

Throughout the day, speakers and panellists from nonprofits, political organisations, and politicians gathered to discuss how the far right is radicalising American politics, and shared their learning and strategies to fightback against hate in the era of Trump.

Ryan joined our very own Joe Mulhall, senior researcher, to deliver the opening remarks, then Vice Chair of the Democratic National Committee and former Obama aide Michael Blake gave a keynote speech on the importance of choosing hope and fighting against systematic forms of oppression like racism and sexism.

"This is a moment where we cannot be silent," Blake said. "We need to choose the sunrise over the sunset."

CHARLOTTESVILLE

Next was a keynote speech from Mike Singer, former Mayor of Charlottesville, which suffered a brutal far right march last August. During the 'Unite the Right' rally, led by leading alt-right figures ostensibly protesting over the removal of a Confederate statue, anti-racist protester Heather Heyer was mown down by a car driven by a white supremacist.

Singer grew up Jewish in Arlington, Virginia, with the American Nazi Party headquartered down the street. These groups were once considered the very 'fringe of the fringe' but today rage, cynicism, and anarchy are now mainstream, he said, and the political results of that were frightening.



THE ALT-RIGHT AND SOCIAL MEDIA MANIPULATION

Bringing together progressive advocates from a variety of backgrounds, experts offered insights from their research and work into social media manipulation and its real world implications.

Becca Lewis, researcher at Data & Society, told the conference: "Groups on the far right are incredibly good at co-opting the language of oppressed and marginalised groups. Almost no-one calls themselves alt right anymore. Now that people have caught on to what that is, many of them are rebranding themselves as identitarians."

She discussed how journalistic values – such as the notion that both sides of an argument should be presented as 'equal' – had contributed to the rise of the alternative right movement by providing them unnecessary publicity.

"While we all like to say sunlight is the best disinfectant, sometimes coverage of the alt right can become oxygen adding fuel to the fire and become PR campaigns for these movements. For them, any coverage is good coverage."

THE ALT-RIGHT AFTER CHARLOTTESVILLE

Panellists from Muslim Advocates, the Southern Poverty Law Center, Media Matters, and ColorOfChange.org then examined the state of the alt-right after the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, taking on the uncomfortable realisation that the day's

events did not spell the end of the alt-right movement, but rather placed them squarely in the spotlight.

Ryan Lenz of the Southern Poverty Law Centre said: "What we need to do now is double down on our commitment to truth, in all of the ways that one does that, and recognise all of the ways truth is being undermined and dissolved."

THE ALT-RIGHT AND THE MIDTERMS

In the age of Donald Trump, and the clear influence of the alternative right movement on the Republican Party, HOPE not hate's Campaigns Director Matthew McGregor moderated a panel discussing the influence of the alt-right on the impending midterm elections in November and the impact of the fringe right on the Republican party.

Fringe Republicans may be gaining the spotlight, but as *New York Times*' op-ed columnist Michelle Goldberg said, "it's the nature of a party to become more extreme as it becomes smaller."

One of the few bright spots on the panel was a discussion on organising and resisting. The panellists reflected on door-knocking in Virginia, connecting with conservative parents in new ways, and progressive organisations like Indivisible.

And Goldberg was excited to see that people have burrowed into electoral politics and were now organically using strategies that the Christian right once used to build power.

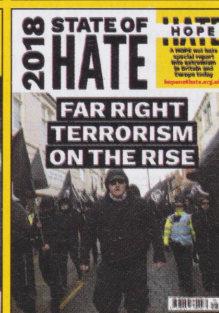
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May's Militant Tendency

The toxic combination of Arron Banks' entryism and Boris Johnson's leadership ambitions will both serve to drive the Tories much further to the right, warns Nick Lowles

"THE BEST way to secure Brexit and our country's future is via the Conservative Party," wrote Arron Banks last month.

The man who bankrolled UKIP and then put £7m into the Brexit campaign has now got a new project: to boot out "traitor" May and replace her with a right-wing leader.

"Either we follow Theresa May and end up with "Brexit In Name Only", which is going to poison and weaken our country for a generation," he told Leave.EU supporters, "or we take control of the situation ourselves and stick two fingers up at the anti-democrats who want us to be controlled by Brussels forever."

As he urged his 90,000 Leave.EU members and the 1.4m social media followers to join up, he added:

"Our plan is to roll out a campaign that connects with local councillors, party chairmen and MPs to change the direction of the party and unite the right. "We want people to join the Conservative Party, attend local meetings, and then push for fundamental change within the party. "Soon we will launch a grassroots campaign by writing to all Tory councillors and local party chairmen and starting a recruitment drive to reinvigorate the party. We will support Brexit MPs and recruit new members, hopefully in areas where the party has extreme "remain" MPs."

Banks and his long-time sidekick Andy Wigmore have an ambitious plan and it would appear that they are already having some success. By the end of August Conservative Party Central Office had confirmed

that over 10,000 people had joined the party, with a steady number of new recruits coming in every day.

Reports in the national newspapers suggest that Remain-supporting MPs are becoming particularly concerned with an influx of new members in their local Conservative Associations.

Anna Soubry, probably the highest profile Remain Tory, has even written to the party urging it to suspend all new applications so that it can establish a new vetting process.

Publicly, the Conservative Party is denying that the party is being targeted by an orchestrated entryism campaign, but privately there are others who share these concerns. In an email to local association chiefs, the party HQ (CCHQ) reminded of their right to reject those "whose declared opinions or conduct shall . . . be inconsistent" with party objectives or "likely to bring the party into disrepute".

Banks' initial request to join the party was turned down by CCHQ, but he subsequently joined the North West Leicestershire Conservative association, home of hardline Brexit MP Andrew Bridgen.

While Banks and Wigmore like to exaggerate, no-one should be under any illusions about the threat they pose the mainstream of the Conservative Party. With party membership at just 124,000, it would not take much for hardline Brexit supporters to play an influential role in the party's future.

Banks has a target of 50,000 new Tory recruits. If even half that number join, and the likelihood is that they will be active, then the CCHQ has problems.

It is not just on Europe where



Banks and Wigmore will be taking their divisive politics into the Conservative Party



this entryism will be felt. Over the past two years Leave.EU, and Banks personally, has peddled a toxic anti-immigrant and Islamophobic narrative, as is evident by the unpleasant memes the group has put out.

The Tories should also be worried about the way Banks does politics, as he is quite prepared to exploit tragedies, foment dissent and use extremist language to whip up publicity and anger. He wrote in his book, *The Bad Boys of Brexit*:

"Ten days to go! I've decided that from now on, we should just focus on immigration. The media will attack us, but it doesn't matter. We will do whatever we need to do to get people talking about it. Today that meant exploiting a dreadful incident in Orlando, Florida yesterday in which forty-nine people were murdered in a gay nightclub by a Muslim with an assault rifle.

"We weren't ashamed to use it to remind voters of the dangers posed by open borders and we posted an ad featuring a picture of terrorists waving AK-47s under the headline: 'Islamist extremism is a real threat to our way of life.

OPERATION UNITE THE RIGHT



(above)
Leave.EU's
campaign logo

Act now before we see an Orlando-style atrocity'."

The problem for the Conservative Party is that former UKIP voters are already influencing their party and turning it to the right. Our recent polling shows how the collapse of UKIP's 2015 vote had a big impact on the attitudes of the 2017 Conservative Party voter.

Far from being outside extremists on the fringes of the party, the hardline views of Banks and Wigmore will resonate with a large section of party members and supporters.

At the moment it seems as though the Brexit Bad Boys are throwing their support behind Boris Johnson who, despite the buffoon-type antics, is incredibly popular with Tory members and activists and is likely to challenge May for the leadership at some point this autumn. Moreover, as

we have seen with the controversy over his burqa comments, he is prepared to play to a populist right-wing gallery to get to his long-cherished top job.

After Johnson refused to apologise for his burqa comments, Tory peer Lord Cooper said: "The rottenness of Boris Johnson goes deeper even than his casual racism and his equally casual courting of fascism. He will advocate literally anything to play to the crowd of the moment. His career is a saga of moral emptiness and lies; pathetic, weak and needy; the opposite of strong."

The similarities with Donald Trump are striking.

Johnson will seemingly do whatever it takes to secure the party leadership, and this is likely to include a ramping up of his anti-Muslim narrative, wrapped of course in the guise of national security, as well as whip up English nationalism, which in turn could cause a reaction in Scotland and Wales.

If non-Conservatives think a right-wing Tory shift will alienate them from voters, they should think again. Johnson's profile and nationalist message goes down well with the public and his apparent 'strong' leadership is what many voters, especially disillusioned working class Labour and former Labour voters, want.

In his latest campaign email, Arron Banks is celebrating his initial success.

"Watch this spot as we start the 'Conservative Grassroots Mutiny' campaign. The truth is that a Blue Wave, led by Leave.EU and our fantastic supporters, is now on the way. Those of us who believe in independence are mobilising and uniting once again for the good of the country."

And he does not plan to stop with just installing Boris as leader. Banks wants nothing more than a radical overhaul of the party.

"Local associations should have power handed back to them including the right to hold primary contests for parliamentary seats and select who they want, rather than have politically correct candidates imposed from the CCHQ candidate sausage factory."

In time, Banks will obviously fall out with Boris Johnson, but for now, while their initial interests coalesce, they both seem determined to move the party to the further right.

	Total	UKIP 2015	Con 2015	Con 2017
Statement A: On the whole, immigration into Britain has been a good thing for the country				
Statement B: On the whole, immigration into Britain has been a bad thing for the country				
Agree with statement A	60	26	55	47
Agree with statement B	40	74	45	53
Statement A: 'It is wrong to blame all Muslims for the actions of a violent minority				
Statement B: Islamist terrorists reflect a widespread hostility to Britain amongst the Muslim community				
Agree with statement A	72	42	69	63
Agree with statement B	28	58	31	37
Statement A: In general the different ethnic groups that make up this country get on well				
Statement B: There is an increasing amount of tension between the different groups living in Britain				
Agree with statement A	47	25	45	40
Agree with statement B	53	75	55	60
Do you think Islam is generally compatible with the British way of life or generally a threat to British way of life?				
Generally a threat	35	71	43	49
Generally compatible	30	8	25	21
Neither	19	11	19	18
Don't know	13	8	11	10
Prefer not to say	3	1	2	2
There are no go areas in Britain where sharia law dominates and non-Muslims cannot enter				
TRUE	32	62	42	47
FALSE	31	12	25	22
Don't know	37	26	33	31

Difficult conversations lab

HOPE not hate is establishing a Difficult Conversations Hub to train and equip people to improve the way they engage those with different views, encourage constructive discussions about the issues that divide communities and develop techniques to overcome the gulf in perceptions of integration in Britain today.

Our training will particularly be aimed at training council staff, statutory agencies, trade unions, faith networks and individuals from community and voluntary organisations to help them better understand and appreciate the cultural and political anxieties of the communities they are working in and to find positive ways to interact with people with different views.

We cannot create more cohesive communities without addressing difficult issues. People on the frontlines of our communities are often confronted with challenging attitudes, but do not always have the skills, knowledge or confidence to deal with these encounters. The training will explain the need to address these difficult issues and how best to do it. It will also explore ways to reduce community tension and conflict resolution as it will investigate ways of de-escalating issues through dialogue and problem-solving.

Our training, which has



DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS TRAINING LAB

been piloted in the West Midlands and schools in Essex, will use empathetic listening and agitational questioning skills. We will also draw on 10 years of HOPE not hate organising, a data-driven understanding of the political and cultural attitudes of local communities and the lessons from running 60 citizens' panels in the National Conversation on Immigration.

The lab will prepare training modules for specific communities and audiences. There will also be a 'train the trainer' course will equip people to deliver Difficult Conversation training themselves.

Our training will be particularly useful to engage people who are economically pessimistic and believe that their concerns are being ignored by politicians and the mainstream media. We will use a combination of empathetic listening and agitational questioning to prepare participants to engage with people of different views and earn permission to be heard.

The training will avoid traditional facts-based responses and instead focus on learning how to use stories, practical examples

from one's daily lives and values to create shared ground. We will also draw on our attitudinal research and focus group work to find the best emotional arguments we use, which is often a far more effective way to convey a message.

HONESTY IN CONVERSATION

Our training is honest and will not avoid the difficult issues. It will not try to pretend everything about immigration and multiculturalism works and it will try to offer real and effective solutions to the issues that most concern us (such as the impact of immigration on wages

and public services, and grooming) and contrast that with the hyperbolic and mostly ineffective solutions offered by extremists.

We will also work to make people understand political and economic trade-offs, and through this show how the extremists' 'have your cake and eat it approach' cannot work and will only make things worse.

UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE TRAINING

We will draw heavily on HOPE not hate's data so we can both tailor our training to the needs of local communities but also to get participants to better understand the political and attitudinal views of those they wish to engage. ■



For train drivers, trade unions & the Labour Party since 1880

Passengers are fed up with Britain's privatised train operating companies. They know the privatised railway isn't working; that the freight and train companies are ripping off the taxpayer and ripping off passengers. And that's why the Labour Party is right to promise to bring Britain's railway back into public ownership.

It's a popular pledge – let's build a better railway under Labour

Mick Whelan, general secretary

Tosh McDonald, president

Simon Weller, assistant general secretary

To learn more about the Difficult Conversations Lab or to request training, contact difficultconversations@hopenothate.org.uk



Solidarity from the POA
on the 150th Anniversary
of the TUC.

**Wishing
HOPE not hate
a successful
campaign.**

Steve Gillan
General Secretary

Mark Fairhurst
National Chair

Back to school

Jemma Levene looks forward to an even more successful school year

HOPE NOT HATE'S Education Unit is all set for the new academic year, kick-starting things by running CPD (teacher training sessions) in schools in our target areas. Throughout the year, we will be running interactive workshops for schoolchildren of all ages, as well as training teachers and safeguarding leads.

Education Director Owen Jones explains "We use the data from our Fear and HOPE surveys to identify areas where students are more likely to be vulnerable to adopting racist ideologies. These tend to be isolated rural and market town communities, where multi-culturalism is seen as a threat not an opportunity."

In the academic year 2017/18 we visited 107 schools, educated 16,983 students and created 608 HNH Ambassadors (a four-week course for Year 9 pupils), as well as running CPD for 212 adults.

In communities, frustrations about the pace of change and a sense of being left behind are brought into

**“
the most well-received CPD
session I have seen from a
visiting speaker
”**

Headteacher feedback from a session run in early September



the classroom as expressions of injustice, such as why no one is looking out for them and their families, or why there are no campaign groups for white people. This sense of injustice can manifest as anti-migrant, anti-Muslim, racist sentiment, at which

point teaching staff often feel truly out of their depth. Our workshops aim to tackle "cultural poverty" experienced by young people in rural, mono-cultural areas.

With our evaluation showing that 84% of attendees at our workshops

with no understanding of prejudice come away with a strong understanding of the subject, we can make a real difference to the atmosphere in schools and wider communities. 83% of those pupils who believe that prejudice does not cause any harm come away from our sessions with a good understanding of the harm it causes.

We deliver training to teachers both on site and at our designated teacher training days. We offer training on spotting the signs of hate in schools, on having open conversations with students who show signs of vulnerability to radicalisation and on making changes in school communities to build a more inclusive school atmosphere. We promote a whole-school approach to our pedagogy, as part of a school's wider commitment to safeguarding.

OUR PROGRAMMES

We custom fit our delivery in schools by consulting in advance with staff to fit the size of group and pupils' abilities and age. Our programmes:

- provoke an emotional response from the class
- use storytelling or an activity (normally rigged so that the class can experience the feeling of injustice before discussing it)
- challenge the students on what prejudices they already hold and how they might be unwittingly enacting on these
- emphasise the need to tackle prejudice at its most minor level
- demonstrate how minor acts can develop into ingrained prejudices and discrimination

This year, we are keen to integrate our Education work with our wider Training programme, and also take the learning we have amassed to the Department of Education and LEAs. We want to see an improved understanding of the issues facing young people in isolated communities, and how that is impacting on wider issues of integration and belonging in Britain today.

Brexit is failing It's time for a rethink

Nick Lowles and Cormac Hollingsworth

WITH JUST WEEKS to go for the Government to agree a deal with the European Union on Brexit, the British public are none the wiser about what the deal will look like. But what virtually everyone agrees on is that the deal is likely to be a poor one. If they agree a deal at all.

A 15,000 person poll commissioned by HOPE not hate and Best for Britain found widespread pessimism over the chances of a good deal. For Remain voters, the very prospect of Brexit drove them to despair. For the bulk of Leave supporters, few believe the Government will deliver the Brexit that they want.

However, the poll did reveal that the British public were becoming more nervous with Brexit as the clock ticked down. This was reflected in the fact that Remain had opened up a seven point lead over Leave, which is now consistent with other polls conducted recently, and that more people believe that many of the key political and economic issues facing Britain are best served by us staying in the EU than being outside than they did during a similar poll taken earlier this year.

Remain supporters now are in the majority in 341 of the 632 constituencies in England, Scotland and Wales, which means that 112 seats have swung since the Referendum.

Every Scottish constituency would back Remain, as would 25 of the 40 constituencies in Wales.

While there remains a

narrow lead for Leave in England, 97 constituencies have shifted from Leave to Remain, and there are a further 71 constituencies where a further swing of 2.5% would see them flip from Leave to Remain.

More recent polling suggests that the mood against Brexit is hardening. A new NatCen poll gives Remain a 59/41 lead, though when adjusted for those who did not vote in 2016, the new lead is 54/46.

In March, HOPE not hate came out against a hard Brexit, believing it would have a devastating affect on the very communities that needed help most. What has happened in the intervening six months has not only re-confirmed our view but made us more worried about what Brexit will mean.

It seems impossible for Theresa May to sell her version of a soft Brexit to the European Union, let alone her own MPs. She is then left with a Canada style option, which would have a disastrous economic impact on Britain, or leaving the EU without a deal – and all the calamities that come with that.

Either option will be a disaster for Britain and so, given that this decision will impact on the future of this country for the next 20 years we are now urging this process to halt. The Government has had over two years to prepare for Brexit but, with just weeks to go until a decision has to be made, the likelihood of a good deal is diminishing fast.

HOW PARTIES DIVIDE ON BREXIT

Party	Remain	Leave
Conservatives	26%	74%
Labour	75%	25%
Lib Dem	81%	19%

However, we must also issue a word of warning to those who simply want to re-run the Referendum campaign in the hope of getting a different result. Unless we understand why people voted for Brexit in the first place then we are likely to repeat the same mistakes and could well see the same result.

Many Brexit voters are angry. Globalisation has not worked for them and austerity has further hurt them. The Labour Party – which many once considered to be their party – has, they believe, abandoned them. And all around them they see change. Immigration and the European Union have taken the brunt of their anger and disillusionment.

At the Referendum itself, remaining in the EU was the status quo option, but given that the status quo was not working, they chose the change candidate – Leave.

An economic and political offer, that gives these people a future for themselves and their children, needs to be made if we are to win these voters over.

HOPE not hate's research has always found a direct correlation between negative attitudes to immigration and economic pessimism. Brexit

turned all that on its head. Suddenly, the most optimistic about the future were the very people who were previously most pessimistic.

When people raise concerns that re-running the referendum could lead to social unrest, it is worth pointing that these voters will also feel betrayed when their hoped for economic improvements are replaced by a massive downturn in the economy that will accompany a hard Brexit.

If we are to successfully stop this Brexit disaster then voters need to be offered a Brexit Dividend as an alternative. It is now clear that Brexit will cost Britain tens of billions as a consequence of continuing contributions to the EU, the impact on our economy and a loss in tax revenue. It is time that voters were offered a choice, either to go ahead with that or to use that money to rebuild Britain's communities, modernise British industry and upskill our young people so they are able to compete in our globalised world.

If we can do this, then we become the change option. ■

**A Brexit Dividend
will be released
later this month**

HOW WOULD YOU VOTE IF A REFERENDUM WAS HELD TODAY?



2.6M PEOPLE HAVE NOW SWITCHED SUPPORT FROM LEAVE TO REMAIN

WHO ARE THE SWITCHERS?



21%
of Labour
Leave voters
would not
vote leave
now

32%
of voters that
have switched
are between
25 and 34
years old



Middle-aged
switch voters
aged between
35-54
account for
39%
of the total.



The largest
demographic
to switch is
younger women
who voted
Conservative
in 2015 and
Labour in 2017.

WALES

2016



NOW



NEW VOTERS ARE KEY:

63% would
vote Remain in
another referendum.

73% of people
did not realise how
complicated and
difficult the Brexit
process would be

72% say that
what's best for the economy
should guide Brexit negotiations
while 17% say it should be
reducing immigration



COMMENT

Is it time for a new

With concern about the rise in the far right, Nick Lowles looks at whether it is time to resurrect the Anti-Nazi League

Last month Labour's Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell asked whether "it's time for an Anti-Nazi League (ANL)-type cultural and political campaign to resist" the growth in "far-right politics in our society."

McDonnell said the ANL had also helped pioneer "influential cultural movements like Rock Against Racism (RAR), which attracted tens of thousands of people of all ages to anti-racist festivals and protests".

"We should seriously look at emulating the work of the ANL and Rock Against Racism at a time when the far right once again poses a genuine threat to our society," he concluded.

His comments were echoed a few days later by a letter to *The Guardian* from several of the ANL's original leadership, among them former Labour MP Peter Hain, the ANL's National Secretary Paul Holborow and Red Saunders, a central figure in Rock Against Racism.

"We need a broader based, imaginative and vibrant campaign which unequivocally opposes all forms of racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism," they wrote.

So, should we set up a new ANL?

I understand the attraction of relaunching what people think was a successful campaign and in principle HOPE not hate would happily support a truly broad-based anti-racist movement, but leadership, strategy and tactics matter.

A new organisation that simply tries to re-run the battles of the 1970s will not be effective. The nature of Britain's far right has changed substantially and so have their tactics.

There is no doubt that the Anti-Nazi League and its associated Rock Against Racism were fantastic organisations that galvanised hundreds of thousands of people and provided a positive alternative to the violent thugs of

the National Front and the British Movement. However, let us be very clear, the ANL and RAR were campaigns of their times. The threats we face today are very different from the 1970s and so the strategies and tactics we require need to be different too.

Today's far right threat is not driven by nazis, but rather through an anti-Muslim and Islamophobic agenda. It is not organizationally-led, but rather it is largely organic, fast-changing and

multi-faceted. New organisations spring up and quickly decline and are easily replaced. Demonstrations are visual articulations of far right activity, but the real battle is *online*.

In the 1970s the ANL successfully framed the National Front as the "Nazi Front". It was successful because it was absolutely true. The National Front was a nazi organization.

Most of today's most dangerous far-right leaders and groups are not, so



Anti-Nazi League?

shouting “Nazi” and “fascist” at them simply will not work. The public do not believe it, because it is not true. At best our attacks don’t then hit home, at worst wrongly labelling people seriously undermines our credibility and actually pushes people away from us. Of course there are some nazis in there, but these represent a tiny minority. Labelling everyone who attends these demonstrations or supports them online as a “nazi” or “fascist” undermines

our approach and disguises the far more serious threat the new far right movement poses.

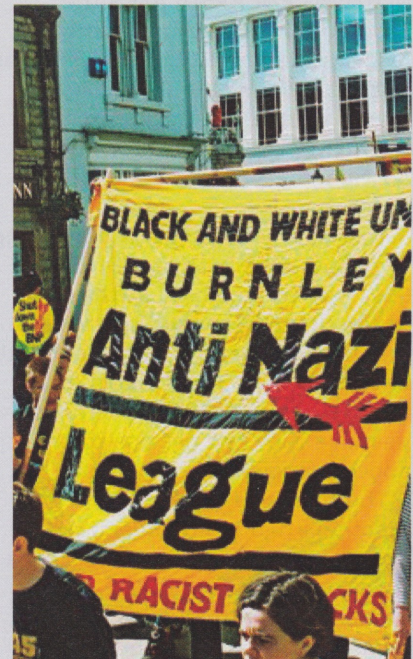
Likewise, focusing primarily on demonstrations – which remains the core of Unite Against Fascism and Stand Up To Racism activism – is also strategically wrong (see Joe Mulhall’s excellent article on page 24).

In the 1970s the demonstrations – and associated confrontations – played a central role for the National

BURNLEY BNP PROTESTS

IN 2002 the British National Party won three seats in the local council elections. A protest was organised by the Anti-Nazi League at the next council meeting. Dozens of ANL supporters shouted abuse, threw flour over the newly-elected BNP councillors, including one who was a grandmother in her 60s and very new to politics. Worse still, an ANL supporter was arrested in possession of socks filled with pool balls.

The headlines in the local newspaper the next day were, predictably, awful and if anything drove more people to the BNP.



March for Tommy Robinson, London 9th June 2018.
Photo: Steve Eason



Front. Today, demonstrations are just a small, but of course highly visual, part of the far right threat. I could liken demonstrations to an iceberg. They are merely the visual part of a much bigger and deeper problem.

The sight of 15,000 angry people on the streets last June in support of Stephen Lennon, shortly after he was imprisoned for contempt of court, has triggered much of the talk about a new ANL. But when we look at the far-right reach online then we can really see the scope of that reach. Almost one million people signed a Change.org petition demanding Lennon's freedom.

In the immediate aftermath of the Westminster Bridge terrorist attack, the English Defence League and Britain First could only muster a couple of hundred people each on demonstrations. Online, there was a very different story. Lennon happened to be in the area at the time of the attack and the angry video he made was watched millions of times on different social media platforms within 72 hours. The most mentioned person on Twitter in the UK on the day of the attack was Paul Joseph Watson, the London-based editor-at-large of conspiracy outfit InfoWars. His anti-Islam tweets were retweeted and liked by tens of thousands of people.

More recently, the 20,000 people attracted on to the streets for the two 'Free Tommy' demos pale into insignificance to the 4.2m people who watched the 'Homecoming' video

Lennon made on the day of his release from prison.

The far right's online reach is staggering. After the US nazi website Daily Stormer was hacked in 2017, it was revealed that there were 100,000 unique viewers a month in the UK alone. That's 100,000 different people in Britain accessing a US nazi website.

The Canadian-based Rebel Media, which used to employ Lennon and is now the home of Katie Hopkins, has just announced that its YouTube channel has passed 1,000,000 monthly subscribers. Hopkins has almost 900,000 followers on Twitter. But all this is beaten by Paul Joseph Watson. He has 1.35m followers on his Youtube channel and 910,000 followers on Twitter.

Challenging the far right narrative online has to be at the core of any new anti-far right strategy.

The fact that today's far right are not traditional nazis makes them more dangerous. The British public, on the whole, do not like nazis. Indeed, much of our recent history and popular culture was shaped by our war with Hitler and so, as a result, there was always a ceiling of support for Britain's post-war nazi groups. In 2009, at the height of its support, the BNP polled 6.4% in the European elections. It was still a frighteningly high vote, but it is hard to see how they could have increased more under the leadership of Nick Griffin – a self-confessed fascist, Holocaust Denier and white supremacist.

Today's far right is being propelled by anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiments that are far more widespread in society than Griffin's fascist views, so this gives them a far bigger pool of potential supporters and makes it far harder to challenge.

New research from HOPE not hate shows the scale of anti-Muslim attitudes in this country. More people think that Islam is incompatible with the British way of life than think it is compatible. More people think that there are Muslim no-go zones in this country where sharia Law dominates and non-Muslims cannot go, than think this is false.

Broken down by class, age, education and political outlook, attitudes are even worse.

So yes, it is important to try to monitor groups like the Football Lads Alliance, but we also have to recognise that these groups do not operate in isolation but merely tap into popular feeling. To challenge these underlying views requires a strategy of winning the hearts and minds, offering real solutions to perceived problems and providing an alternative narrative.

Protesting alone will have little impact on these wider societal views and will probably have the unintended consequence of reinforcing and hardening the positions of those going on the demonstrations.

Likewise, no-one is going to argue against large music festivals, but we have to ensure that they resonate with people

THE MALTBY MINERS

NOTHING ENCAPSULATES the problems with traditional anti-fascism than an EDL demonstration against grooming in 2012. On the march were a few dozen men and women from Maltby, a former pit village seven miles out of Rotherham.

The Maltby contingent, consisting of mainly men in their 40s and 50s, walked as a bloc at the back of the demo. They had travelled in together on a coach but felt slightly uncomfortable about being on an EDL demo. But they marched because they felt passionately about the issue.

The daughter of one of the marchers had been abused and – understandably – they were angry.

This was the first EDL demonstration that they had been on and few felt any strong

affinity to the group. However, that soon changed as the march reached the town centre and they came under abuse from the UAF-organised counter-demonstration.

"Nazi scum off our streets," shouted the anti-fascist protestors. "Scum, scum, scum," came the repeated chant of others.

Horrified about this reception, the Maltby crew quickened their pace and soon were fully integrated into the main EDL crowd.

HOPE not hate spoke to some of these people a few days later and they were still shaking with anger about the hostility of the crowd. They were not "fascists" and they certainly were not "scum". They were just angry.

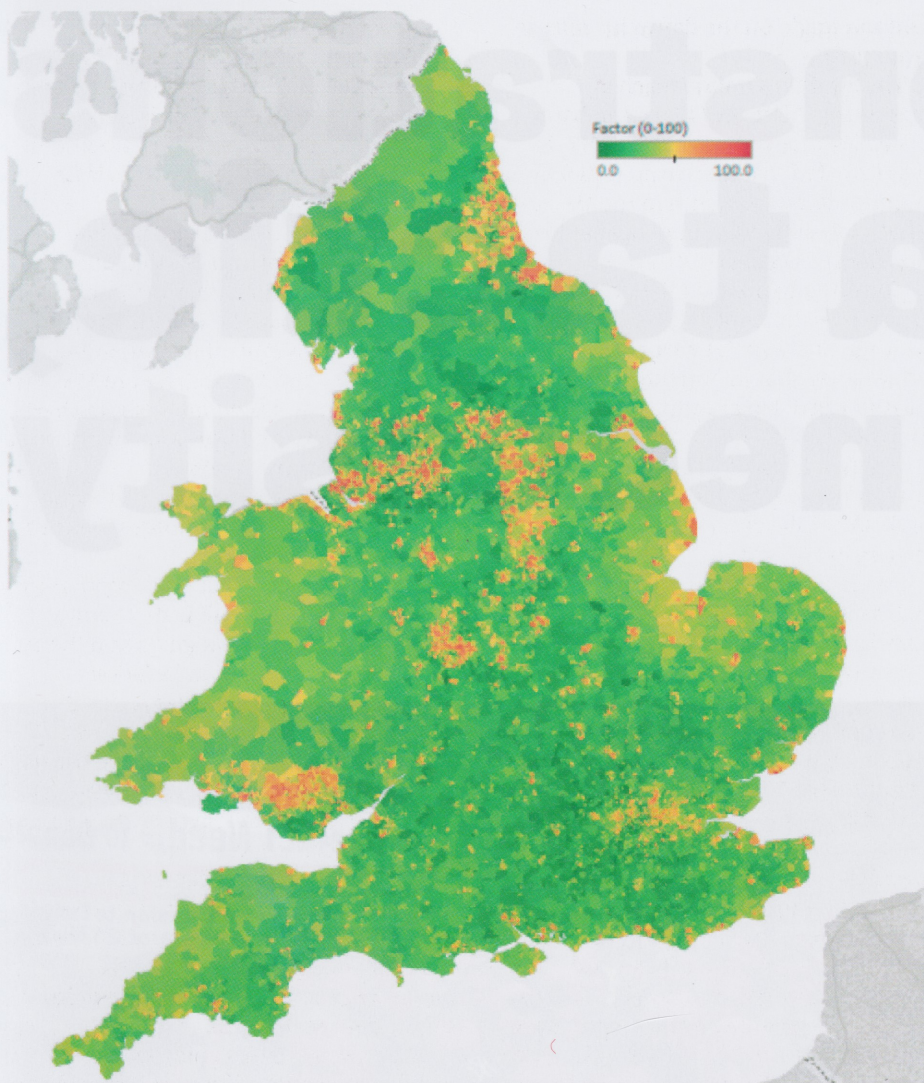
They were angry at the Muslim men who had raped their daughter. They were angry at the council and

police for allowing this to happen. And they were angry at the Labour Party – their party – who seemingly did not give a damn.

And then they were angry at the anti-fascists for calling them "fascist scum".

We knew some of these people. Many had been loyal NUM members during the Great Strike. A few had even handed out our leaflets when we campaigned in Maltby to oust a BNP councillor a few years before. They were not fascists or scum – but merely angry people.

However, the failure of the Labour Party to address the grooming issue in South Yorkshire and the abusive antics of the anti-fascists who greeted them in Rotherham that day all contributed to pushing these decent people into the hands of the far right.



HOPE not hate has identified the communities most vulnerable to anti-immigration and Islamophobic messages. This is where we need to prioritise our campaigning

who might be susceptible to far right messages or we risk the danger of simply talking to the converted and reinforcing the cultural chasm in society.

Almost 80% of people who live in the Hackney North & Stoke Newington constituency believe that immigration has been good for Britain. In Boston & Skegness, 62.2% of people believe immigration has been bad for Britain.

Spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on a music festival that will largely attract people who are already inside is no substitute for doing the hard work to win the hearts and minds of people in the key communities most at risk from extremism. This slow, often difficult work, has to be the priority.

Any new organisation has to be prepared to tackle the supposedly difficult issues which, sadly, are all too often ignored by much of the existing anti-fascist movement and the Left in general. Our research has shown that last year's terrorist attacks reinforced and deepened the suspicion and hostility towards British Muslims and Islam in general. In a poll taken last July, shortly after the attacks, 42% of people said that they viewed Muslims with more suspicion.

The Football Lads Alliance was formed as a direct response to the terrorist attacks, and while it has subsequently drifted to the right, it did begin with a genuine desire not to be a racist or far right group but merely to express the anger of people who wanted more action taken.

It is easy to condemn the FLA, but where was the progressive movement in expressing its anger and opposition to the terrorist attacks? If we are not speaking out and campaigning against those Islamist extremist groups who want to indiscriminately kill and injure innocent people, can we really be surprised when far right extremists take advantage.

The same goes for on-street grooming by gangs, probably the single most symbolic issue used by the far right, which has plagued too many working class communities in the north of England and the Midlands. The Left has at best given lip service for these appalling crimes and at worst been perceived as finding excuses and covering for them.

How can we genuinely engage in work against the far right in places like

Rotherham when we have nothing to say about the issue of grooming, which has ruined the lives of 1,400 young people? Can we really be surprised when far right views are taking hold in Yorkshire, where 63% of people believe that the police and media are deliberately playing down the ethnic origin of the perpetrators because of political correctness, and we are not offering any alternate solutions to the problems?

Not being afraid to tackle and provide alternative solutions these difficult issues present and training activists how to talk to people with different views, has to be a central plank to any new group.

Fundamentally though, defeating the far right has to be about offering political and economic solutions to the problems many people are facing. Research to be released by HOPE not hate later this month will show a direct link between economic pessimism and fear and hate of 'the other'. We can engage in all the great cultural initiatives we want, but if people in those communities who have lost most from globalisation and post-industrialisation, continue to feel ignored and abandoned by political parties, we are unlikely to make much headway.

And this, ultimately, is the choice we have to make. We can engage in a traditional anti-fascist campaign of demonstrations and large-scale cultural events that celebrate diversity and multiculturalism, but ultimately this is just engaging with the 60% of society that already likes the country we have become. Or we seriously try to engage with the 40% who do not.

If we really want to defeat the far right then we have to engage with the people most likely to be attracted to them and their messages. We have to reach out to where they are, not where we would like them to be, and engage seriously on the issues that concern them.

Some people will say that we can do both and while that's true to an extent, in a world of limited resources and activists we do have to prioritise. Yes, I am more than happy to engage in a discussion about a new broad-based anti-racist movement but strategy and tactics matter hugely. ■

Demonstrations are a tactic, not a necessity

Argues Joe Mulhall

COUNTER-demonstrations are central to the history of anti-fascism. Landmark events such as the Battle of Cable Street in 1936 and the Battle of Lewisham in 1977 remain sources of inspiration for each new generation of anti-fascists. Yet as a movement, we should be wedded to our objectives, not our tactics, and if they become ineffective or even counterproductive then we have to think again.

The threats faced in the UK at the moment are very real. Large numbers are attending far right demonstrations and many more are engaging in far right politics online, often completely outside the confines of traditional organisational structures.

The recent wave of pro-Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (*aka* Tommy Robinson) events has attracted numbers onto the street not seen in decades and represent the emergence of a far right popular front, bringing together numerous groups around single rallying cries such as “free speech”, street grooming or Lennon himself.

Adding confusion to this complex and fast-changing



Football Lads Alliance 2nd London march, October 2017. Photo: Steve Eason

scene is the Football Lads Alliance (FLA) which has managed to attract tens of thousands onto the streets, ostensibly under an anti-terrorism and anti-extremism banner.

So far, the response to both the FLA and the “Free Tommy” demonstrations from the Socialist Workers Party-led Stand Up To Racism and Unite Against

Fascism (UAF) has been to call yet more counter-demonstrations. In the face of a new, different and changing threat, parts of the anti-fascist movement have once again sought to repeat age-old tactics.

Part of the problem is that counter-protests are inherently reactive. It means the far right are always setting the agenda and defining the issues around

which we will fight.

We also have to consider how it looks from the outside when a counter-protest is called against an “anti-terrorism”, “anti-child rape” or “pro-free speech” event, even though we know these issues are just being used by the far right.

The return to counter-protests is partly borne of the incorrect assumption that it

was counter-demonstrations that finished off the English Defence League (EDL).

Yet, as the historian Nigel Copsey has suggested, it can be argued that UAF counter-demonstrations “fed the EDL in terms of encouraging the ‘buzz’ – the anticipation, the excitement of confrontational street demonstration.”

Joel Buscher, author of *The Making of Anti-Muslim Protest: Grassroots Activism in the English Defence League*, also argues that UAF-style opposition gave some EDL activists “the ‘buzz’ of activism” and “intensifies their feelings of injustice”.

Anyone who monitored EDL demonstrations saw that, rather than UAF counter-protests, it was the operational decisions of the police to move events out of city centres, often to isolated car parks, that significantly minimised the negative impact on local communities and also reduced the opportunity for confrontation that frequently drove some far right activists to attend.

This, coupled with the diminishing returns of repetitive street protests, infighting (often seemingly fostered by anti-fascist intelligence work), the correct framing of the EDL as “far right”, long-term community work in affected communities and increasing police crackdowns all contributed to its demise.

We would do well to learn the lessons of the fight against the EDL and grasp that anti-fascism is about being effective, not just about making ourselves feel like we are doing something.

FOOTBALL LADS ALLIANCE

The situation becomes even more complicated when it comes to the FLA. As has been recognised by most anti-fascists, the FLA is a complex movement comprised of a large far right and anti-Muslim contingent as well as a less-defined mass of working class supporters mobilised by anger over recent terrorist attacks.

Some, while rightly

concerned at such large numbers on the streets being addressed by well-known anti-Muslim extremists, have instantly and unthinkingly called for counter-demonstrations as the solution to this new threat: once again the kneejerk adoption of a tactic before a genuine analysis of the nature of the threat had been carried out.

With a movement like the FLA this was especially careless, as many attending those early events in London were not overtly politicised and certainly would not have identified themselves as far right.

The danger is that people who attended demonstrations against terrorism or grooming might start to identify in opposition to anti-fascism and the left in response to being opposed by them.

Shouting “nazi” and “fascist” at people who are not nazis or fascists runs the risk of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. At best, this merely baffles those non-far right demonstrators and, at worst runs the risk of forcing people who were previously “unpolitical” towards the far right.

Buscher correctly warns that “we would do well to reflect on how *our* actions shape the process through which people in groups such as the EDL come to believe that they are living on the “front line” of an imagined “clash of civilisations”.

It would, of course, be wrong to say that counter-demonstrations are *always* wrong as all communities have the right to unite and stand in opposition when under threat. But, equally, it is misguided to say that counter-demonstrations are always right or the only option.

With calls for the revival of the Anti-Nazi League now being heard, it should be remembered that we cannot fight each new threat by presuming that old tactics will be successful again. Effectiveness has to be our watchword. ■

Will Europe turn right?

Graeme Atkinson

WITH THE MAY 2019 European elections looming darker on the horizon, the media's political prediction season is starting with everything from ghastly forecasts of a far right avalanche to studied “it'll all be alright on the night” complacency from the those who remain steadfastly sceptical about any advances of the far right.

As usual, the line of truth runs somewhere down the middle even though, undoubtedly, the factors – and these are numerous and varied – driving the presence of the far right are accumulating rather than diminishing.

Driving support for the far right is pessimism about the future of the European Union (EU), a broad distrust of the political system and a widespread belief that population has been betrayed by a corrupt, self-serving elite.

De-regulated capitalism, increasing automation and the adverse impact of globalisation on traditional working class communities have led to turn their backs on the parties which they believe have abandoned them.

This has all been compounded by continued concern over immigration into Europe, the perceived erosion of national culture and antipathy towards Islam.

Against this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that the far right's simple populist, nationalist and anti-elite message resonates so well.

Of course, not all of these characteristics are present in every country affected by far right populism but every country has some of them and, clearly, they will influence the outcome for the far right populists in the Euro-elections.

Not all the above-mentioned parties stood in the 2014 European elections or even existed at the time but in the intervening period all have been able to help the political axis to tilt to the right.

The total figure for the “outside right” vote in the 2014 elections to the 751-seat European Parliament was 16,735, 421 with 83 seats won.

Whether it will improve on that in May remains a matter of speculation. The trends are already there: especially if the right-wing populists continue to set the agenda and, while the much-publicised planned intervention of ex-adviser to Donald Trump, Steve Bannon, to “hi-jack” the European far right might not be as well received as he thinks, the political mainstream still needs to light the beacon of resistance. ■

See Europe map overleaf

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European picture

Graeme Atkinson

AUSTRIA For decades, the Austrian Freedom Party – co-founded by former Nazis – has functioned as the bastion of both legal right-wing extremism and right-wing populism in the Alpine republic. Once the trailblazer for the European far right, it is no longer a novelty. However, once more in the Austrian government as a junior partner to Chancellor Sebastian Kurz's Conservatives, it is the motor behind the coalition government's more hardline anti-migrant policies. In 2014, against competition from two other right-wing extremist parties, it gained 19.7% and won four seats in the European Parliament. On the back of its current positions, it looks set to increase its vote and number of seats in 2019.

DENMARK The Danish People's Party (DPP) is a veteran outfit of the populist, anti-EU, Islamophobic right. It has been in the Danish Parliament since 1998 and is now the biggest party on the liberal/conservative/right wing but until now it refused to be part of a government. After next year's national elections that might change. The DPP's vote has been stable in recent years – over 20%, won from a strong and aggressive anti-immigrant/refugees and anti-Muslim agenda. In the elections to the EU-parliament in 2014, the DPP won 4 seats (26.6%) – a result it will probably will achieve again. The DPP is a member of the EU alliance, European Conservatives and Reformists.

NETHERLANDS Led by the eccentric Geert Wilders, the current Dutch far right contender in the EU elections is his wholly-owned, bitterly anti-EU and Islamophobic Freedom Party. Now, though, it is under heavy challenge from – and may well be overtaken by – Thierry Baudet's equally hard right populist and Islamophobic Forum for Democracy (FVD), and may not improve on the 13% and four seats it won in 2014.

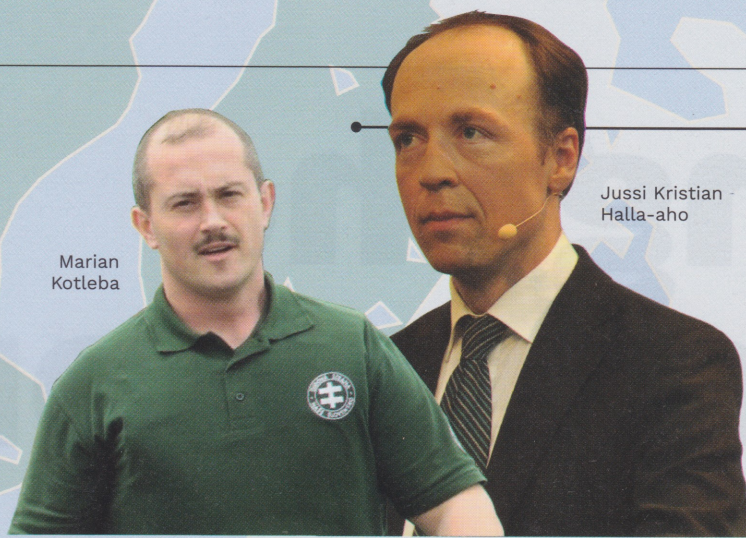
FRANCE Carrying the far right torch for France is Marine Le Pen, chief of the Front National (FN) now rebranded as National Rally in a futile effort to get rid of the fascism-associated smell that tainted the FN. Le Pen failed miserably in the Presidential elections and the parliamentary elections that followed them in April 2017 but may improve – party fragmentation and accusations of the misuse of £6.3 million of European Parliamentary funds notwithstanding – on the FN's 2014 performance (24.85%/24 seats) as discontent with Emmanuel Macron's government increases.

GERMANY The growth in influence of the Alternative für Deutschland since its formation in 2013 has been dramatic. In the 2014 Euro-elections, before it emerged as being fully-fledged extremist and nationalist, it won 7% of the vote and seven seats. Since then, it has broken through to the Federal German Parliament, winning 12.6% and 94 seats and access to considerable state funding – as much as €12 million annually.

SWEDEN The Sweden Democrats (SD), a far right populist formation whose origins lie in the organised racist and nazi right, has progressed more or less uninterrupted since it began winning elections in the early 2000s. Now, standing at 22% in the polls, it is forecast to overhaul the country's powerful Social-Democratic Party in September's national elections. It won't. Its bizarre claim that being "Swedish and Jewish is impossible" will not help it. In 2014, it scored 9.7% and secured two seats in the European Parliament.



Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders



Marian Kotleba

Jussi Kristian Halla-aho

FINLAND The bitterly anti-EU and anti-globalist Finns party, now headed by the criminally-convicted Jussi Kristian Halla-aho, took 12.9% of the vote and returned two Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in the 2014 elections. Since then, however, it has been involved in a debilitating split that resulted in the departure of its long-time former leader Timo Soini and this may hinder its election effort. The party is currently polling at 10.3%.

POLAND In Poland, it is the governing Law and Justice Party (PiS) that leads the right-wing populist charge with virulent xenophobia (in a country that has few immigrants), repressive amendments to its constitution and legal framework and steps to bolster the country's social and cultural conservatism. In the Euro-Parliamentary ballot, Pis will likely sweep the board. While the extra-parliamentary extreme right can mobilise a big street presence, it is PiS that governs and is tightening its grip on power.

CZECH REPUBLIC Founded in 2016, the anti-immigration and Euro-sceptic Freedom and Direct Democracy party remains a relatively unknown quantity as it has only been subjected to a single major electoral test: elections to the Czech parliament's lower house, the Chamber of Deputies, in 2017 when it won 10.64% and 22 of the Chamber's 200 seats.

HUNGARY In Hungary, two parties wave the flags of far right-wing populism: Viktor Orbán's nativist Fidesz and, now less volubly, the extreme right-wing Jobbik party whose political clothes it stole. Orbán's grip on power is near total and he is able to conduct his war on democracy with something approaching impunity. Equally, Jobbik was damaged by a split earlier this year. In May 2019, Jobbik's share of the vote looks set to fall further at the expense of Fidesz's relentless xenophobic, "Christian" and vehemently anti-EU onslaught.

SLOVAKIA There is nothing that fits the description "populist" in Slovakia, the far right running being made by Marian Kotleba's openly nazi Kotleba-LSNS (Kotleba-People's Party - Our Slovakia) which has 14 seats in the Slovak parliament. For the Euro-elections, its prospects are very good thanks to the strong possibility of a very low turnout (just 12% in 2014). A realistic scenario is that the nazis will get at least one MEP.

BULGARIA In Bulgaria, the populist right is represented by the United Patriots, an alliance of three previously independent groupings of the far right: Attack, the Bulgarian National Movement and the National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria. These fused in 2016 and contesting the 2017 parliamentary elections won 9% and 27 seats in the 240-seat parliament. Though stridently nationalist, anti-EU, anti-Muslim, anti-Roma and strongly pro-Russian, the alliance is part of Bulgaria's current governmental coalition.

GREECE As Greece's massive economic and social crisis has receded in intensity, the nazi Golden Dawn has lost some of its clout. Hit by trials of its entire leadership for murder and operating as a criminal organisation, Golden Dawn which polled 9.4% and grabbed three seats in the European Parliament in 2014, has stagnated but not shrunk. The outcome of the trials may be a pointer to its prospects.

ITALY Rebranded as The League, the vitriolically anti-immigrant Italian populist movement Lega Nord is now a party of government, its boss Matteo Salvini holding the powerful post of interior minister and cranking up anti-Roma policies and promising "mass deportations" of migrants. The League's results in the 2019 Euro-elections will depend on whether he delivers his repressive promises. On the face of it, the party should easily outscore its 2014 tally of 6.15% and five seats.

Having the conversation

Rosie Carter reflects on her time on the road



NATIONAL CONVERSATION

In the past 18 months, I have organised over 70 focus groups across the UK for HOPE not hate, from Shetland to Penzance, Folkestone to Ballymena.

Most of these have been about immigration as part of the National Conversation that HOPE not hate has organised together with British Future.

This has been one of the largest public consultations on immigration and has offered a unique insight into how people across all nations and regions of the UK feel about immigration, identity and nation. The other focus groups have helped us understand opinion on Brexit.

Across the country, whatever the theme, these conversations are inevitably complex, and often cathartic. People talk about their lives, problems and fears but also their hopes about where they see opportunity and how optimistic, or pessimistic, they feel about the future. They talk about their children and their friends. They talk about their identity, and about broken trust in the political system.

Often, people are talking about everything at once. As a participant in Basildon put

it: *"It's huge chips on shoulders isn't it?"*

In the National Conversation, we have written extensively on the impact of local issues in shaping attitudes, a "local lens" framing immigration as a national issue.

Participants often voice specific concerns, linked to school places, GP booking systems or about integration and particular areas of residential segregation or local incidents. However, a sense of place – and personal circumstances more broadly – also shapes this.

The tone of these conversations was starkly different in areas with greater opportunity from those that had lost industry and population and had experienced years of decline.

While there were people who bucked the trend, participants who were less confident about their own life opportunities were more likely to see immigration or multiculturalism as a threat. Those living in more deprived areas, as well as participants in less secure and less-well paid work, were more likely to feel policy was unfair to them and to their local communities and have less

trust in the political system.

"The good times have gone", a woman in Kidderminster told us. Often, a sense of nostalgia feeds this, a rosy picture of how things used to be. Often it is about loss.

The pace of change has overwhelmed communities across the UK. In many places there has been a hollowing-out of the centre of the labour market, with the loss of secure manual jobs at the same time as rapid migration from the EU.

Warehouse work has replaced old trades and industry. In many places, there has been little thought for the human elements in this rapidly changing landscape. Spaceship-like units and warehouses appear beside motorways, while migrant workers working in them cram into poorly maintained multiple-occupant properties.

Local infrastructure struggles under austerity measures and new pressures while precarious employment grows without the sense of community once evident in traditional industries. Globalisation has changed the structures that govern people's lives, but immigration that has

occurred alongside it offers a tangible and convenient target for resentment.

A sense of insecurity dents social status and can be exploited. Nowhere is this clearer than in towns like Grimsby, where the fishing industry has diminished, taking with it jobs as well as the sense of collective pride and local identity that accompanied the work.

Streets of closing shops, now dotted with Romanian delicatessens or closed pubs converted into mosques, new sounds of Bengali, Latvian and Polish have become the factors generating concerns about the pace of change but also frequently speak to pre-existing prejudices.

Wherever you are and whatever the questions are about, you always hear the word *'they'*. Sometimes this refers to migrants, an unnamed group of unknown people. Sometimes it refers to Muslims, more often than not as a homogenised and stereotyped group. Sometimes, it refers to an out-of-reach and out-of-touch élite or to the government or politicians, sometimes to the EU, sometimes to big business and the City. And, sometimes, it refers to all



these groups at once...the external powers that, directly or indirectly, account for this loss: *"They took away from Grimsby and they never put anything back...They're only panicking now it looks like their boat might be rocked, they didn't care before"*

More often than not, 'they' are the people for whom the system works. They are the people who can make the rules but who can also break the rules. They are telling you who you can and can't be, what you can and can't say. "They" have felt the economic gains of immigration but not the local pressures here. They are the people who always come out on top.

Lost industry and changing employment, local decline alongside changing neighbourhoods and increased diversity mean that identity issues and people's standards of living become intertwined.

Resistance to change is not only about a decline in welfare and opportunity as these anxieties trigger defensive instincts to protect and reassert social position.

Tradition is "revived" as an issue in places that have seen rapid change. Media stories about bans on Easter eggs

or Nativity plays stick with people because they resonate with a broader worldview. A sense that British or English identity is waning becomes more pronounced, and often, "they" are responsible: *"At Christmas because of the ethnic minorities, they cancelled the nativity because they thought they might find it offensive"*

Although mostly, people observe anti-racist norms – usually stereotyping, using discriminatory language or naming specific nationalities or religions – racist sentiments often underpin people's actual views.

Sometimes, prejudice comes through as genuine fear in dominant groups of being "overtaken", from a dislocation of social status and wellbeing for those who are white and British: *"I'm proud, yeah it's our country. We're not racist but we are tired and fed up of being told we can't be British. You're frowned upon for being proud to be British."*

The term "multiculturalism" as a policy and as a concept is one that has become associated with cities, as something which facilitates social segregation where people are seen to live

separate but "parallel" lives. Often, it is seen as unfair. While there is a view that tradition is in decline, and people are "forced" to keep up with changing social norms, minorities are held to get preferential treatment.

Fears of a "Muslim takeover" are worryingly widespread. This is a suggestion that has moved from the fringes to the mainstream as it addresses concerns about a changing way of life and a dislocation of status.

Moreover, it is legitimised by the clear reality that some communities are segregated. Integration has become a concern that many have hung broader resentment around, a term that strings together different issues.

It encapsulates cultural anxieties and a feeling of unfairness, of being left behind. It mixes the economic with cultural, driving a wedge between those for whom a multicultural society works, and those it fails to serve, between "them" and "us".

Unfairness, and a sense that "it's working better for you than us", feeds a swelling anti-establishment feeling. In Lincolnshire, a man told me: *"We're not left behind...the*

word we used was abandoned. Politicians don't like it. Because that's what it is."

Everywhere, from Hammersmith to Paisley, people have mentioned the distance they feel from Westminster. People do not feel that politicians know what life is like outside central London and do not think they care: *"They never think about money up here, not just in certain areas. It's like we are the forgotten area of the country."*

People do not trust politicians to tell the truth but feel they will do anything to play party politics.

Brexit was not about one issue and the Leave campaign deliberately mixed up immigration, refugees and freedom of movement and offered an empowerment to anti-establishment and free speech argument: *"The majority voted to leave the EU because something had to change, the destruction of our way of life had to stop, so get on with the job in hand"*

It is true that for some, Brexit appealed to a sense of loss, with campaigns full of false promises, and bullheadedness masquerading as strong leadership. But Brexit also

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offered an opportunity to shock the political classes, an attempt at reasserting power.

In a focus group testing Remain messages before the referendum, a woman in Sheffield said she did not care what Brexit will mean for her and her family. She did not care about the impact of a recession or losing her job *"so long as it hurts them down there"*.

In the scenes of despair as the votes rolled in, of tears tracing down EU flag face paint, the order of winners and losers tilted. If only in that moment, London lost, Wigan won.

For some, the decision to leave the European Union has offered a glimmer of hope that things are going to change, that what is lost might return or, at least, that someone *might* listen.

Despite all economic projections that areas that have already suffered years of economic decline will be worst affected by a recession triggered by Brexit, it is rare that people we spoke to shared this view.

Conversations were tinged with optimism even while news broke about factories and businesses relocating to mainland Europe. People often stated that they do not trust economic projections or threats of industrial relocation as this is just scaremongering from "them" trying to recalibrate things in "their" favour.

The hope that things will now get better, that Brexit will reclaim what is due to people, is resounding and, at times, haunting: *"They're changing the passports to blue, aren't they? How they used to be before we went into the EU. So, if that's happening then, we can go back to Great Britain surely."*

It is ironic that a Franco-Dutch firm got the contract for the manufacture of the blue passport intended as a

symbol of the UK's regained "independence" from Europe but jokes about this don't sit well everywhere.

After the referendum, it did not take long for arguments about the travesty of a closed-minded, ill-informed north upsetting the more forward-looking, open cities, a supposedly clear line between those who know and those who are ignorant.

But this claim, which fails to understand real problems, drives a wedge between those who do not share the problems of Grimsby or Oldham or Sunderland and

those who desperately want change.

It is vital that to understand these fears as well as the hopes and also grasp how they intersect.

The amalgamation of issues that inform hostile attitudes is complex but, in daily experience, it can seem rational.

Resistance to changes that are unfavourable is understandable. At the same time, those who have been "left behind" also need to keep up with changing social norms. If we are to shift the ground on race, faith and

belonging, we also need to offset dominant sensitivities.

Bridging the social divisions exposed by Brexit, we need to unpick the matrix of issues and address exactly those concerns that fuel anger and hostility towards others.

We need to understand how fears of Islam taking over relate to where people see opportunity and how optimistic – or pessimistic – they feel about the future. We need to understand how distance from Westminster relates to identity.

We need to understand everything at once. ■

NATIONAL CONVERSATION MAP OF VISITS



**The National Conversation on
immigration is available at
<http://nationalconversation.uk>**

A free speech martyr Lennon's widening support

ON THE 25th of May, Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson) live streamed outside a courthouse in Leeds, confronting the defendants in the trial, shouting insults. He was arrested and pled guilty to contempt of court, receiving a 10 month sentence and activating a three month suspended sentence he had received for a similar charge in Canterbury in 2017.

Lennon's imprisonment sparked a campaign on social media under the hashtag #FreeTommy which soon also turned into street demonstrations in the UK and abroad. The support for the campaign quickly gained a scope far beyond what Lennon had been able to muster before. This level of support is

especially noteworthy given Lennon's extremity, as s the former leader of the English Defence League (EDL), a violent and anti-Muslim street gang, with a history of outspoken anti-Muslim hatred.

After his arrest, Lennon was portrayed as a martyr and received an outpouring of support on social media as well as considerable attention from mainstream media outlets. The Twitter campaign trended in many locations around the world, amplified by many large far-right Twitter accounts such as Rebel Media reporter Katie Hopkins and former Breitbart London editor Raheem Kassam. Millions of posts were published on Twitter mentioning Robinson in the days after his arrest and several petitions

were created, calling for the release of Lennon. However the attention has clearly reached far outside of the murky far-right corners of the internet.

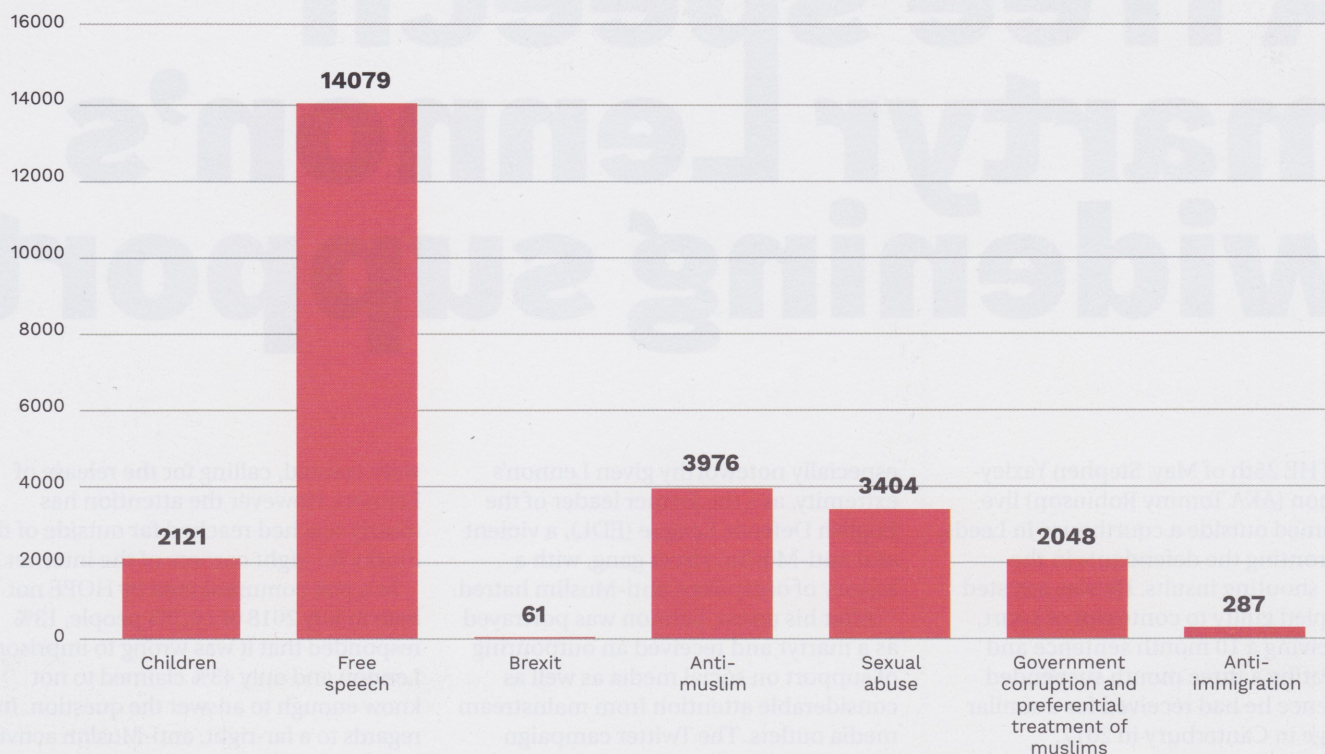
In a poll commissioned by HOPE not hate in July 2018 of 10,383 people, 13% responded that it was wrong to imprison Lennon and only 43% claimed to not know enough to answer the question. In regards to a far-right, anti-Muslim activist, with a background in a violent street gang, these are significant numbers.

Several rallies were also organised in support of Lennon. The largest one, on June 9th, might have attracted as many as 10,000 people onto the streets of Westminster, making it over double the size of any demonstration held by the EDL.



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DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN DIFFERENT TOPICS % OF TOTAL



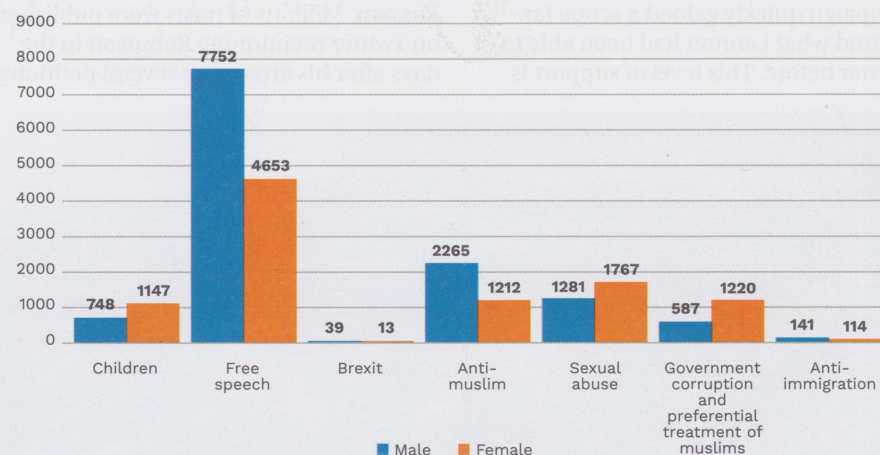
However, it's still online where the scale of support has been the greatest. Several several petitions were created, calling for the release of Lennon. One racked up over 630,000 signatures this far, an indication of the intensity of the movement. The signatures and related data, which contain name, and geographical information as well as a motivation for signing provide some important insights into the movement around Lennon. This article is based on data from the two largest petitions on Change.org in support of Lennon.

DRIVERS

Slightly less than 10% of everyone who signed the petitions on Change.org also made a comment that is published on the petition website. These comments can help us understand the motivation behind people's signatures and why Lennon received the amount of support he did. He regularly livestreams on the topics of grooming gangs and has done so outside trials before, but this time it sparked an international campaign.

Unsurprisingly, it's not primarily the topics of grooming or even anti-Muslim that attracted signatures. Only 5.2% of the respondents mention keywords associated with the issue at hand, grooming and sexual abuse. Similarly, 6.4% mention Muslims or Islam. 22% does, however, mention free speech in their comments, making it the most commonly occurring theme in the

BARS FOR EACH TOPIC, SUBDIVIDED PER GENDER



dataset. These comments also often contain wider anti-elitist claims, and claims of corruption among politicians. It's often implicit in these that Muslims are unjustly shielded from criticism and that there is an agenda to cover up crimes by Muslims. Additionally, 243 respondents go one step further and call Lennon a "political prisoner". This is what one signator in Ramsey wrote:

*It was a travesty of justice and politically motivated decision to jail Tommy Robinson. A case of jail the messenger and ignore the message. He's a **political prisoner** [emphasis added], in prison because*

the politically correct establishment don't like his message and refuse to address the real underlying problem of THERE'S ONE RULE FOR THE MUSLIM POPULATION AND ANOTHER FOR EVERYBODY ELSE.

Public comments are an imperfect method of understanding people's motivation for signing, social desirability bias being just one of many issues. Furthermore, free speech is a theme that the far-right has mobilised for decades. It's almost universally seen as a positive, democratic value and can effectively be used to create and image of victimhood for a person



or organisation. "Free speech" can be used to transform one's struggle from that of an angry hater to a just fight on unequal grounds, like David and Goliath. Therefore it can be used to hide other, more extreme and socially unacceptable goals and opinions, consciously or not.

However, it's clear that the mobilisation of the theme of free speech has helped to propel Lennon into international fame and make Robinson into something of a household name, to a scope beyond that enabled by his previous activism. The framing has borne fruit in the form of a larger and broader base for Lennon while, judging from rallies in his support, retaining its extreme anti-Muslim agenda.

GENDER GAP

The gender balance among the signatories is worthy of note. HOPE not hate observed on the day of the rally that more women were in attendance than are commonly seen at far-right rallies in the UK, including the EDL demonstrations which Lennon had previously organised. These observations have been born out by the petition data. 38.9% are coded as women by matching each signator's first name towards a database of census data.

This is a shift that has come after Lennon's departure from EDL-style street activism, however we cannot properly investigate the drivers of this change as

there is little previous data on Lennon's audience available to us.

We can however, compare what themes men and women utilise in their comments. Women do not appear to be motivated by substantially different themes to men, with some exceptions. Women are as likely to mention sexual abuse and grooming as men, they are also as likely to mention immigration and to use anti-Muslim rhetoric. Women does, however, account for 60% of the comments mentioning "children", 21% more than expected considering that women make of 39% of the sample. Interestingly, the other topic where a gender gap is also clearly observable is free speech. Women contribute 8% less of the free speech comments than would have been expected but it still constitute the most common topic among women.

Furthermore, the use of the theme "children" is only used by a fraction of all women in the dataset. Judging from the comments, people's motivation to sign the petitions, both women and men, is most commonly attributed to free-speech and the closely related topics of claims of government corruption and the idea of a cover-up of preferential treatment of Muslims, which is equally common among men and women.

CONCLUSION

Some wider conclusions can be drawn from Lennon's increasing support and how it's been expressed after his

imprisonment. Lennon's support has clearly grown in size and to a degree also broadened and includes a larger proportion of female supporters. Over 420,000 signatures originating from the UK is a large number for any petition, but becomes especially noteworthy considering Lennon's harsh anti-Muslim rhetoric and violent history. For it to happen on this scale should therefore be seen as a sign that its supporters perceive their ideas to be increasingly accepted.

More over, the gender balance of its support has shifted towards a larger female base. 38.9% of the signatures are by women, a similar result is given by the poll commissioned by HOPE not hate from July this year, where 10% of female respondents answered that it was wrong to imprison Lennon compared to 16% for male respondents, meaning that women constitute 38.5 % of those that responded positively about Lennon. This is approaching the range that previous research has put women's support for radical right wing parties in Europe, where the women's vote is often recorded between 40 and 45%.

The imprisonment of Lennon, while only getting a support from a minority of the general population, has evidently helped in making him something of a household name, a worrying trend for an activist that has claimed that Muslims are "are waging a war on us". ■

"Tommy" comes up

By The Right Response Team

STEPHEN YAXLEY-LENNON'S most recent scrape with the law has turned him into a magnet for the far right and anti-Muslim scenes internationally, not least in North America, where he has received political and financial support from the American "counter-jihad" milieu, sections of the mainstream right-wing media and the Washington elite.

English Defence League (EDL) founder Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson) is, now back on the streets having been jailed in May after pleading guilty to contempt of court for his actions outside a Leeds court where a sexual grooming gang trial was underway.

While his appeal against his original contempt of court conviction in Canterbury was rejected, his Leeds conviction will be reheard in September.

Lennon was immediately painted a "free speech martyr" by right-wing elements, supposedly a victim of political persecution for his "exposure" of street grooming gangs (despite his silence about sex abusers within the EDL).

Lennon, who has convictions for fraud and violence, has physically attempted to intimidate journalists and others he disagrees with and he has displayed utter contempt for justice and the rule of law.

However, the "Free Tommy" campaign was able to whip up formidable hysteria both online and offline, turning Lennon into the *cause célèbre* of the international right, amplified by North American figures in positions of influence and with deep pockets.

WASHINGTON

Remarkably, Reuters reported in July that Sam Brownback, President Trump's ambassador for international religious freedom, had lobbied Britain's US ambassador Sir Kim Darroch on Lennon's behalf, reportedly telling Darroch that "if Britain did not treat Robinson more sympathetically, the Trump administration might be

compelled to criticise Britain's handling of the case".

Reports suggest that Brownback's actions had been influenced by Breitbart News Network, the pro-Trump "news" outlet and frequent Lennon cheerleader.

Republican Congressman Paul Gosar also threw his weight in behind Lennon, tweeting Trump in June: "I'm concerned about the arrest and conviction of Tommy Robinson in Great Britain. British Gov't seems more interested in covering up rape than seeking truth".

In July, Gosar, who represents Arizona's 4th congressional district, also appeared on stage at the "Free Tommy" rally in Whitehall alongside a wide variety of figures from the European far right, including Filip Dewinter of the Belgian fascist Vlaams Belang party.

Steve Bannon, former Breitbart chief and former chief strategist in the White House, told the *Sunday Times* that he was "ecstatic" that Lennon was back on the streets, continuing: "Tommy is not just a guy but a movement in and of himself now. He represents the working class and channels a lot of the frustration of everyday, blue-collar Britons".

Bannon, alongside his sidekick Raheem Kassam (a close Lennon ally), is set to launch "The Movement" in September, a foundation which will supposedly offer aid to right-wing populist parties across Europe ahead of the 2019 EU elections and may seek to tap into the energy generated by Lennon's campaign.

Even Donald Trump Jr., the President's son, took to Twitter to respond to Lennon's arrest. Republican officials have form in amplifying British anti-Muslim extremists, with President Trump himself retweeting content from the anti-Muslim street gang Britain First in November 2017.

THE RIGHT-WING MEDIA

Much of the drive of the "Free Tommy" campaign was powered



by the right-wing North American alternative media. A particularly loud voice was Lennon's former employer, the far right Canadian platform Rebel Media, which even concocted a "Tommy Robinson chant" ringtone.

Ezra Levant, Rebel's founder, reported on Lennon's trial from outside the courthouse, and it was to Levant that Lennon gave his first interview after his release with Levant claiming his treatment in prison amounted to "torture". The far right conspiracy site InfoWars posted updates from Lennon's team with Alex Jones falsely describing Lennon as a "political prisoner".

Backing for Lennon has, however, crept into slightly more mainstream platforms. Tucker Carlson, a host on the major right-wing channel TV Fox News, gave Lennon's



p Trumps stateside

...p Jr · May 27
it. Don't let America follow in those

...ngland for reporting on a court case.



(above) Donald Trump Jr., the President's son, took to Twitter to respond to Lennon's arrest

(top) Ezra Levant
(left) Steve Bannon
(right) Alex Jones

cause significant airtime on his show. Fox News has, in fact, provided Lennon with a platform for years, host Brian Kilmeade telling Lennon "we got your back" in 2013.

Carlson hosted Lennon on the evening of his release, claiming that "the United Kingdom has become a mere shadow of the nation that gave us freedom of speech, freedom of the press, a host of other rights [...] Nobody knows this better than Tommy Robinson".

Carlson went on to distort the facts of the case, telling his millions of viewers that Lennon "went to prison in a supposedly free country for expressing unfashionable opinions in public".

US DOLLARS

Highly significant is that fact that the "Free Tommy" campaign has not only been amplified by American voices, it has also been greased with US cash.

American figures have long thrown money at Lennon's cause. When he was jailed in 2013 for attempting to enter America with someone else's passport, he received \$10,000 from "counter-jihad" figure Pamela Geller and Andrew Gilligan of the *Sunday Times* has reported that Lennon's wage, until recently, has been paid by US billionaire Robert Shillman, founder and chairman of the technology multinational Cognex Corporation.

However, it is a new development to see money from the US directly funding large far right street demonstrations. The "Free Tommy" rallies outside 10 Downing Street

on 9 June and 14 July were funded and co-organised by the Philadelphia-based Middle East Forum (MEF) think tank.

These rallies witnessed a sordid collection of far right figures spewing tirades of Islamophobia to crowds of thousands. The 9 June rally attracted around 10,000, the largest far right demonstration in the UK for decades and saw violence from sections of the crowd against police officers, resulting in five injuries and nine arrests.

MEF was founded in 1990 by Daniel Pipes – an influential, more mainstream figure in the American "counter-jihad" milieu – as a neoconservative think tank on Middle Eastern affairs, campaigning against *sharia* law and the supposed "Islamisation" of the United States.

MEF launched its Legal Project (LP) which raises and distributes funds for "anti-Islamist" authors, activists and publishers who face defamation lawsuits in June 2007, one such recipient being the notorious Dutch Islamophobe Geert Wilders.

In a blog following Lennon's release, MEF announced that it had provided funds to Lennon's legal team, had "funded, organised and staffed" the "Free Tommy" rallies in June and July, had paid for Gosar's travel to the rally, and also lobbied Brownback to raise Lennon's case with the UK's ambassador. Kassam, an MEF fellow, told the *Sunday Times* that MEF gave "£10,000 – £15,000 per event".

MORE POPULAR THAN EVER

Lennon has gained a level of support in America unprecedented for a British far right extremist. An official in the Trump administration has lobbied on his behalf, he has been broadcast to millions on Fox News and an American think tank has funded large-scale far right demonstrations in the heart of London in his name. Thanks in part to his new allies in the US, Lennon is more popular and influential than ever before. ■

THUG. CRIMINAL. VIOLENT EXTREMIST.

Despite efforts to paint him otherwise, Stephen Lennon is a far-right, Islamophobic extremist with an extensive history of violence and criminality.



TO HIS SUPPORTERS and some overseas media commentators, he is a “free speech” hero, a “martyr of the working class” or “a cultural commentator”.

But let us be absolutely clear. English Defence League (EDL) founder Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka ‘Tommy Robinson’) is a far-right, Islamophobic extremist with an extensive history of violence and criminality.

Ignoring or playing down his extremism simply plays to the cult of personality he and his backers are trying to develop, to gloss over his extensive and violent record.

FAR RIGHT

When he stormed the offices of a newspaper in Wales, Lennon said: “What this paper has done, it has classed me as far right. I haven’t challenged these accusations for years, I should have been. There’s nothing far right about me.”

Stephen Lennon isn’t a “nazi”, a “fascist” or a “white supremacist”. Mis-/over-use of such terms risks devaluing them beyond usefulness and more importantly, mis-categorisation reveals a lack of understanding which inevitably prohibits effective opposition.

But he is ‘far right’.

Both as leader of the EDL and later as a Rebel Media contributor, Lennon and his associates warned of a decaying Britain in crisis, heading for destruction, betrayed by existing political elites and institutions.

He has attacked the liberal, progressive societal consensus and

those on a supposedly homogenous “left” who advance it.

He has articulated conspiracy theories about the mainstream media, has vaunted bastardised images of historical figures and roots his politics in a mythical history; his sleeve of patriotic tattoos includes a crusader knight, a poppy, the Magna Carta and a quote from Winston Churchill.

ISLAMOPHOBIC

In a phrase oft-repeated by anti-Muslim activists, Christopher Hitchens is said to have described Islamophobia as “a word created by fascists, and used by cowards, to manipulate morons.”

Though a man of undeniable talents, Hitchens was well wide of the mark on this occasion. The term gained popular usage following the landmark 1997 Runnymede Trust report Islamophobia: a challenge for us all, though there remains no single accepted definition (though it sometimes feels as though “Islamophobia” is held to a higher definitional standard than other terms, like “homophobia”, particularly by those keen to deny you can be “phobic” about a faith or its followers).

In 2005, the Council of Europe offered the following definition:

“[Islamophobia is the] fear of or prejudiced viewpoint towards Islam, Muslims and matters pertaining to them...[taking] the shape of daily forms of racism and discrimination or more violent forms, Islamophobia is a violation of human rights”.

The 2016 definition offered by the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) added: “Islamophobia operates by constructing a static ‘Muslim’ identity, which is attributed in negative terms and generalised for all Muslims.”

His brief contrived penitence in 2013 aside (when he claimed to have quit extremism), Lennon’s views on Islam and Muslims, from his time as founder and leader of the EDL through to today, have been consistently Islamophobic.

He routinely fails to draw a distinction between Islamist extremists and ordinary Muslims. To see Lennon’s prejudiced homogenisation of all Muslims in sharp focus, one need look no further than his reaction to the arrival in Europe of refugees and migrants fleeing Islamic extremism in the Middle East.

He completely refused to draw a distinction between perpetrator and victim, tweeting in early 2016: “I’d personally send every adult male Muslim that has come into the EU over the past 12 months back tomorrow if I could. Fake refugees.”

While in Iraq making our mini-film ‘Life on the run from the Islamic State’, we saw the unconscionable human suffering that IS victims experienced. Only someone blinded by anti-Muslim prejudice could refuse to make a distinction between those Muslims seeking refuge in Europe from those committing the atrocities.

However, Stephen Lennon's Islamophobia is best understood as part of what is known as 'counter-jihad' ideology. Counter-jihadism is a broad alliance of organisations and individuals that believe that Western civilisation is under attack from Islam.

Central to Lennon's Islamophobia, and that of his counter-jihad allies, is the notion that a mythical, usually Christian, western culture and identity is said to be facing extinction at the hands of Islamic invasion. All generally believe that Islam is a supremacist religion and many, like Lennon, see little difference between extremists and ordinary Muslims who live their lives quite peacefully.

While regularly professing to only being opposed to Islamist extremism or, more latterly, that he is against Islam not Muslims per se – "I'm not talking about Muslims, I'm talking about Islam" – the reality of Lennon's rhetoric is quite different.

While Britain's Muslim community is best understood as a 'community of communities', Lennon regularly irons out all cultural, religious, national and socio-economic nuance and portrays Muslims and Islam as a single monolithic block.

This block is usually characterised by its most extreme and unsavoury elements: "Islam is fascist and it's violent and we've had enough!" according to Lennon.

In addition to extrapolating out the actions of a minority, he has also demanded collective responsibility for those actions. In east London in 2011 he seemed to suggest that he and the English Defence League would retaliate indiscriminately should there be another terrorist attack:

"Every single Muslim watching this... on 7/7 you got away with killing and maiming British citizens... you had better understand that we have built a network from one end of the country to the other end... and the Islamic community will feel the full force of the English Defence League if we see any of our British citizens killed, maimed, or hurt on British soil ever again."

Part of his modus operandi is also to (falsely) claim that the mainstream media is scared of covering anything negative about Muslims. In a 2017 interview given to far-right alternative news outlet Rebel Media, he said: "The media steer clear of anything that gives a negative portrayal of Islam" and talked of the "liberal elite agenda".



Tommy Robinson @TRobinsonNewEra · 20h

I'd personally send every adult male Muslim that has come into the EU over the past 12 months back tomorrow if I could. Fake refugees.



His claims are of course spurious. Evidence suggests that, quite to the contrary, the British media's portrayal of Muslims "has been largely negative and stereotypical informed often by a virulent, racialised Islamophobic discourse". Surveys have also shown that British Muslims typically identify as at least, if not more, loyal to Britain than other communities.

EXTREMIST

After a fallout from his #TrollWatch video series, where he stormed the offices of his once-benefactors the Quilliam Foundation, Lennon appeared on the BBC Daily Politics show and said: "I've never been an extremist, ever."

Many will have understandably dismissed this comment as laughable.

The Cambridge Dictionary categorises an extremist as "someone who has beliefs that most people think are unreasonable and unacceptable". Lennon's views as explained above clearly fit this definition.

The Collins dictionary describes an extremist as: "...a person who favours or resorts to immoderate, uncompromising, or fanatical methods or behaviour, esp[ecially] in being politically radical".

Stephen Lennon has stormed into offices to confront journalists and those he disagrees with, appeared outside others' houses at night – clear evidence of using extremist behaviour to advance his political cause. However, when coupled with his own violent record and that of

LENNON HAS A RECORD OF EXTREME VIOLENCE AND CRIMINALITY:

- 12 months in prison for violent assault on a plainclothes police officer
- 12 month community rehabilitation order after leading a 100-man brawl while chanting "EDL till I die"
- suspended prison sentence after being convicted of common assault for head-butting a fellow EDL member
- 10 months in prison for attempting to enter the USA with a false passport
- 18 months in prison for mortgage fraud
- Upon leaving the EDL Lennon even accepted and apologised that his actions over the years had frightened the UK Islamic community. However, the disingenuous nature of his apologies has been put in stark relief since then.
- Stephen Lennon founded and ran an anti-Muslim street protest movement that brought violence to the streets of the UK. He has regularly engaged in violence. He intimidates his political opponents by storming their offices and confronting them at their homes.

the organisation he ran, it becomes very hard for him to reject the tag of extremism.

At its height, the Lennon-led EDL ventured from town-to-town across the UK, leaving a trail of destruction and division in its wake. In 2013, it was revealed that policing costs for its demonstrations had risen to over £10m during four years, with violence being commonplace.

Stephen Lennon is a far-right, Islamophobic extremist and now you know exactly why.

UKIP: Bouncing

As Brexit anxiety mounts UKIP has received a boost, but the party has changed under Gerard Batten's leadership. By David Lawrence

On 14 July, UKIP leader Gerard Batten MEP addressed a crowd of thousands outside 10 Downing Street in support of far-right extremist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson), then behind bars. Projecting his words across a sea of flags, including numerous banners of the racist youth movement Generation Identity (GI), he compared the EDL founder to Nelson Mandela, and railed against “organised paedophile rape gangs” of “followers of the cult of Mohammed”, who was “himself a paedophile and kept sex slaves”. Batten claimed that the government “has become the enemy of its own people”, stating “both our houses of parliament are full of traitors, collaborators and quislings”.

UKIP under Nigel Farage was no stranger to anti-Islam and anti-immigrant messaging, and Paul Nuttall, during his brief reign, brought in a slew of ugly, Islamophobic policies. However, Batten's brazen extremity is a new development for a UKIP leader. Unlike previous UKIP leaders, Batten has fully embraced anti-Islam street politics, appearing alongside a gamut of far-right figures at the gloriously misnamed “Day for Freedom” event in May, as well as subsequent events in support of Lennon during his most recent stint in prison. Batten has also sought to recruit directly from the hooligan-led Football Lads Alliance (FLA) and its offshoot Democratic Football Lads

Alliance (DFLA). Anti-Muslim politics is home territory for Batten, a veteran activist with links in the “counter-jihad” movement.

Another troubling influence on Batten's UKIP is a set of extreme figures from online Alternative Right, who Batten welcomed into the party in June. These are Milo Yiannopoulos, a former Breitbart star notorious for his flirtations with white nationalism; Paul Joseph Watson, a far-right conspiracy theorist and Editor-at-Large of the fake news outlet InfoWars; anti-feminist YouTuber Carl Benjamin (AKA Sargon of Akkad); and Mark Meechan (AKA Count Dankula), an online “comedian” known for teaching his girlfriend's pug to perform a Nazi salute.

The four have a considerable reach; Watson, for example, claims over 250 million views on his reactionary YouTube videos, and has roughly five times the Twitter followers of the official UKIP account. Attracted by Batten's unapologetic willingness to delve into controversy and his support for Lennon, their engagement with UKIP has been semi-jokingly dubbed “War Plan Purple” by Benjamin and described as a “soft coup” by Watson.

This irony masks a serious project. Watson and Benjamin, who hold no official positions within the party, are “advising on getting [UKIP's] messages out”, and were snapped at an August strategy meeting alongside Batten; Benjamin has claimed

that the party is “quite deferential to the things we suggest”. Both Benjamin and Meechan have claimed that they will be speaking at the September UKIP conference, and Benjamin is keynote speaker at the UKIP youth conference in November. Until recently, a Watson video entitled “Why Join UKIP” was front and centre of UKIP's new revamped website. This is a man who, in 2013, described the 7/7 bombings as a “false flag event”.

BACK FROM THE DEAD?

Despite internal discontent, well-known UKIP figures have publicly been largely quiet about Batten's anti-Islam, pro-Lennon path. This is despite the fact that Batten is similar in his statements to Anne Marie Waters, the anti-Muslim activist who panicked party moderates with her September 2017 leadership bid. Batten, a UKIP co-founder and a competent organiser, was installed as leader by UKIP's NEC in February in a desperate attempt to save a party that ex-leader Henry Bolton left near-bankrupt, demoralised and staring into the abyss. Since taking the reins, he has successfully saved the party from imminent bankruptcy by raising £300,000 ahead of the May local elections. Whilst the local elections again saw UKIP again wiped out, Batten has also – crucially – reversed the exodus of the party membership, who were abandoning UKIP at a rate of 1,000 a month under Bolton.

The increase in membership is partially

applicable to Batten's engagement with Lennon's base and Watson and his cohort, with Batten claiming that “our new allies in the alternative media are helping to spread our message to a much wider audience”. In an interesting aside, UKIP's increased engagement in anti-Muslim politics has pushed The For Britain Movement, the far-right party launched by Waters following her leadership bid, further to the right. Batten's extremity has effectively undercut Waters appeal, meaning her party membership has become a haven for ex-members of a variety of far-right groups, including the British National Party (BNP), who are barred from joining UKIP.

The major factor in UKIP's swell in membership is disillusionment over Brexit proceedings. 3,000 people joined UKIP in the month since the Prime Minister Theresa May's “Chequers agreement” (her attempt to strong-arm her cabinet into backing a soft Brexit in early



back?

Gerard Batten talks with
Stephen Yaxley-Lennon
(AKA Tommy Robinson)



July 2018). The Chequers deal, unpopular with many Leavers, has seen May's approval ratings reaching new lows. This is especially alarming for May given that, according to HOPE not hate analysis, roughly 70% of Tory voters now regard themselves as Leavers.

UKIP's membership at the beginning of August stood at 23,000, a far cry from its 40,000 peak in 2016 under Farage. However, anxiety over Brexit continues to mount. Opinion polls have seen UKIP rise by as many as 5 percentage points in the immediate aftermath of Chequers. Whilst it is unclear whether Batten, a figure of evident extremity and lacking Farage's charisma, can fully capitalise on these opportunities, worrying recent polls suggest that 24% of voters would support a far-right, anti-Islam, anti-immigrant party.

HORIZONS

Batten intends to resign in April 2019, although has left open the possibility of

running in the subsequent leadership race himself, in order to secure a mandate. His abdication opens the door for the return of Farage, who has spent the two years since the Brexit vote quietly distancing himself from the ailing party. Farage has also remained off the "Free Tommy" bandwagon (he was recorded off air at LBC telling Steve Bannon that "everybody hates Tommy") and has reportedly expressed disquiet at the path in which Batten has taken UKIP. Following Chequers he claimed that he would "very seriously consider" returning as UKIP leader if Brexit is not "put back on track", although Batten has downplayed this possibility, stating that "a lot of what he says is to do with keeping his viewing figures up on LBC". Set to lose his MEP's salary, it had seemed like another run for a Parliamentary seat may be on the cards, but he has dismissed the prospect of contesting the Peterborough by-election as "utter rubbish".

Farage announced mid-August he will be campaigning for Leave Means Leave (LML), a pro-Brexit group that is set to re-launch its national campaign, so we will once again see Farage boarding a battle-bus and spreading his demagoguery around the country. LML is co-run by Richard Tice, also one of the central figures in the ugly anti-immigrant campaign Leave.EU, which is headed by former UKIP donor and Farage ally Arron Banks, and which is facing intense scrutiny over alleged links to Russia during the Brexit campaign.

Farage and Banks have for now parted ways, as Banks abandons UKIP to urge Leave. EU supporters to join the Tories in order to push for a Brexit leader – Boris Johnson or Jacob Rees-Mogg – in a Tory leadership contest. This drive would also siphon off some of UKIP's potential support, and Farage has spoken out against the move.

It is also worth noting the machinations of Steve Bannon, former chief

strategist in the White House. Bannon, alongside Farage's former aide Raheem Kassam, is set to launch "The Movement" in September, which will offer aid to right-wing populist parties across Europe ahead of the 2019 EU elections. Batten has ruled out UKIP's involvement in this venture, but Farage will likely function as a kind of mascot for Bannon's group.

The ultimate aim of UKIP has always been to exert pressure on the government, something that the party has conspicuously failed to do for the past two years. As many others have noted, British politics is currently unstable, with a loss of support for the mainstream, with voters are polarised and bitterly divided over Brexit. These concerns are unlikely to alleviate any time soon. UKIP can attempt to pressure government by threatening to siphon hard Brexiteers from the Conservatives, and in doing so may have found a reason for its continued existence for the first time since the Referendum. ■

Far right round up

THE NATIONAL FRONT (NF) is Britain's oldest far right political party. Last year, it commemorated its fiftieth anniversary in a small hall shrouded in secrecy and suspicion.

Polish nazis, with whom the party now has a "reciprocal agreement", guarded the hall's doors while, inside, fifty party supporters and a smattering of former members of National Action gathered to hear a series



of speeches charting the party's decline.

Today, the National Front is not even a shadow of its former self. It has fewer than 200 members at a time when the public believes that organisations like it help drive the hostility against Muslims and immigrants that dominates social and national media headlines. The reality is that like most established far right political parties in the UK, the party barely functions.

(left) NF's long-suffering Chairman Kevin Bryan

In August, the party's long-suffering Chairman quit in an alcoholic stupor but, by all accounts, had little or no recollection of doing so when he recovered.

If the party manages to stagger into 2019, it will not, however, be a miracle. Although many, many people have pronounced the NF dead in the past it has survived for fifty one years with the most degenerate, dysfunctional and cerebrally challenged members of the British far right.

The National Front still remains the *Alma Mater* for many fascists, a



Britain First leaders, Paul Golding and Jayda Fransen

hothouse for far right radicalisation, creating an atmosphere within the party where anything politically, socially or criminally is honed in a perpetual atmosphere of paranoia and violence. For example, when the English Defence League (EDL) fractured and radicalised, it was into the NF that the most dysfunctional elements drifted. A recent court hearing in the West Midlands was shown a document written by people aligned to the discussion group, The London Forum, for former members of the banned National Action to take control of the party.

Last year, Britain First finally managed to push all common decency and sense to their limit. Its leading duo, Paul Golding and Jayda Fransen, were sent to prison for their activities (as we had predicted) with allegations of sexual and common assaults hanging over not just Golding but also several of his disciples.

On Golding's release from an 18-week sentence on several counts of religiously-aggravated harassment, he moved his operation to Northern Ireland where he has high hopes of aligning himself and his remaining supporters with disaffected sections of the Loyalist community.

First and foremost, for Golding was to open a front against the party's former caretaker manager, Councillor Jolene Bunting from the Loyalist Shankill Road.

Late in July, on the eve of a party rally in the province, Golding publicly accused Bunting and people in Britain of complicity in the theft of party materials while he and Fransen were incarcerated.

It was little secret that, while Golding and Fransen were serving their sentences (Fransen received 36 weeks in March this year), Bunting and her supporters who had been entrusted with the party's administration had clashed with Golding's family over

access to bank accounts and membership lists.

Golding is now threatening to sue Facebook for removing the party's notorious Facebook page. Using an obscure law under the Good Friday Agreement that pertains predominately to organisations and individuals wishing to operate in post-conflict civil society, Golding is using the law – and being a registrant in Northern Ireland – to align Britain First and himself with former combatant groups and individuals.

Like the National Front and the British National Party (BNP), it is difficult to gauge exactly how many paid members Britain First actually has. For obvious reasons, it allows little factual or truthful information about the organisation into the public domain and, by the time Golding and Fransen were sentenced earlier this year, the party had been undergoing a drastic fracturing of personal and political support.

Golding and Fransen had long wanted to cultivate personality cults around their public profiles but the mainstream media has, in the main, decided instead to mock and denigrate the pair. The furor surrounding the imprisonment of EDL founder and rival Stephen Lennon will have done little to soothe their own notoriously fragile egos.

The British National Party's decline has been even more spectacular than that of the National Front, the party that spawned it. Although the party sits on a nest egg believed to be worth around £8m in bequests, it is dependent on the deaths of its remaining members and hides itself in Cumbria and as far from the public gaze as possible.

Although it carries out sporadic political activity, its membership is dormant, indeed moribund. The party rarely meets away from London where it has three active branches that appear to function independently of the leadership.

Rumours of a leadership challenge last year failed to materialise and it is clear the party leadership has more interest in investing in property than it does in capitalising on the prevailing mood of racism and suspicion that once propelled it into the mainstream of British political life.



Football is revolting

By Matthew Collins

IT WAS IN MAY 1932 that Everton legend William Ralph “Dixie” Dean upset the Nazis.

During a six-game post-season tour with fixtures in Dresden, Breslau (now in Poland), Berlin, Nürnberg and Cologne, Dean instructed his Everton teammates – the champions of England – that there would be no Nazi saluting.

Hitler was still a year away from becoming Chancellor of the Reich, but Nazi saluting was expected and demanded. A footballing legend across Europe for his goalscoring exploits, Dean refused and his teammates followed suit. Their hosts would exhibit great consternation at this “insult.”

Shamefully, the English national team would later give the salute before a match in Berlin in 1938, but legend has it that only a few days before, Aston Villa players gave two fingered salutes to the Nazi hierarchy before a match in Germany.

Football and fascism and football and antifascism have vast and differing histories, yet both have coexisted alongside each other because the beautiful game’s exponents have long waxed from the gantries above that football is for everyone. As legendary Liverpool manager and lifelong socialist Bill Shankly would opine: “Some people believe football is a matter of life and death... it is much, much more important than that.”

El Salvador and Honduras fought a three-day war after a World Cup qualifier in 1969 and later, the first outbreak of the Yugoslav civil war erupted at the 1990 match between Dinamo Zagreb and Red Star Belgrade.

The annals of football and antifascism will forever tell the stories of the historic resistance against Nazism and fascism from Germany, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands. History will also tell how football stadiums were often chosen to host ceremonial and barbaric mass murders.

The history of British football and antifascism resistance is thankfully somewhat less brutal and bloody, but nonetheless still clothed in hurt and struggle. The Hillsborough tragedy in 1989 raised the very real and proven conspiracy theory that the rich and powerful in Britain could conspire to brutalise and besmirch football fans – even as they lay dying. Even the mighty Liverpool football club realised it could too fall victim because so many of its fans were poor and working class. The tarnished image of football fans has often conspired to make them ‘fair game’ for negative headlines and criticism.

Terrace culture has long been associated with racism and minor glimpses of organised fascism. Attending football matches has often been portrayed as an almost casual, recreational



Saturday afternoon trawl through the vulgarity of the English language, a way to express displeasure at multiculturalism – and often, it was.

As Geoffrey Pearson noted in “Paki Bashing in a Northern Town”, during the 1970s troubled sentiments crystallised into “Paki bashing” thanks to attitudes embedded in cultural hostilities and people’s experience of changing economic circumstances. During the 1970s some of the bigger English clubs had enough industrial and unionised working class members in their supporter base with the right mentality to push back against organised racists and fascists. But deindustrialisation and changing demographics saw an isolation of not just working class but also recreational football fans.

By the time the Premier League was launched in 1992 the links between the factory works team and professional football were almost

extinguished. Newton Heath, which would become the dominating force that is Manchester United, actually began life in 1878 as a team for railway workers.

(writing in 2009 and now outdated) It’s worth noting Simon Kuper’s analysis about class and football writing in the *Financial Times* in 2009:

“Almost all of Europe’s best football cities were once new industrial centres. Clubs grew bigger here than in capitals or towns with entrenched hierarchies. That’s why no team from Paris, London or Berlin has won the Champions League.”

It’s not so much a financial as a growing cultural muscle and sentiment that football in Britain, like Rugby League, is the true and forgotten international workers’ playtime. Yet over half of the



teams that competed in the 2016/17 Premier League could have posted profits playing to empty stadiums: something not reflected in their ticket prices.

My own experiences of football and fascism are from the late 80s and early 90s. I was recruited by the National Front outside West Ham's old Upton Park football ground. While selling National Front newspapers outside all of London's football grounds we never encountered physical resistance or confrontation, but there were often emasculated and isolated instances of displeasure.

Resistance to racism and fascism at football has often taken a more cerebral, irreverent or celebratory look at the beautiful game.

When Saturday Comes (WSC) was launched in 1986 as a football magazine, full of biting wit and irreverence for "intelligent football fans."

Campaigning clothing label Philosophy Football launched in 1994 as a celebration of both the progressive footballer and fan, but also celebrated the iconography of so much of the internationalist spirit of the resistance to fascism in and through football. The British Sock Fetish Council formed in 2013 now boasts over 2,000 members obsessed by casual wear, football, antifascism and socks.

There have been notable instances where antifascists have flexed an almost ceremonial muscle in English football. In 2011 the GMB union withdrew £700 worth of advertising when Swindon Town employed the Italian fascist sympathiser Paolo Di Canio as manager, a drop in the ocean to even a small club like Swindon. Later the Durham Miners would in 2013 march into Sunderland's

Stadium of Light and remove their banners from the club's offices when Di Canio took up the manager's position there.

By 2018 the progressive resistance has come full circle. The culture envisaged and encouraged by the likes of WSC and Philosophy Football is now becoming a reality.

A breakaway supporter-run team in the Middlesex Counties League, Clapton Community FC, has already sold hundreds of team shirts in the colours of the antifascist International Brigades (who fought fascism in Spain in the 1930s), with the immortal slogan "No Pasaran" printed on the back.

Bromley FC supporters in the national league display an International Brigades flag in homage to one of their former players who fought in the brigades. A number of other football clubs in the higher echelons of England's non-league pyramid have also developed independent supporters' trusts, with a keen eye on supporting progressive football and, by definition, antifascism.

Dulwich Hamlet in the National League South can attract thousands for hipster chanting in a proudly stated antiracist, antifascist anti-homophobic environment. Sandwiched geographically between Crystal Palace and Millwall its supporters long ago tapped into a feeling of disillusionment with the rampant commercialism and hostility of its neighbours. The club's supporters have excelled in making their club the go-to place for the disinfranchised, the radicals and the *Guardianista*. [tell us more/why]

Thousands of English, Scottish and Irish football fans now belong to the St Pauli network of fancubs [explain St Pauli, what it is], travelling to Germany to watch the second-tier team steeped in the history and tradition of Hamburg's antifascist and anti-nazi resistance. St Pauli football club has become the worldwide benchmark for

fans who want to create a sense of revolution in action. Once a week in Leeds, dozens of local youths take part in football matches and practice with refugee and asylum seekers funded through merchandising and the goodwill of local trade unions and progressive football fans under the banner of Yorkshire St Pauli.

The Great Newton Heath of Manchester United fame has now been reborn as a democratically-run football club playing in the National League North, with its own 4,000 capacity stadium, while flying columns of non-league football fans with antifascist banners from Whitehawk to Gloucester and Tranmere regularly travel the country.

Even Glasgow's Celtic, which has had its noticeable and dark moments, tackles period poverty by giving away free sanitary products to female fans.

The launch this year of groups like Football Lads & Lasses Against Fascism and The Trade Union Football & Alcohol Committee give further indication that football could be experiencing a renaissance of a long missed tradition of fighting fascism. This comes in the wake of the Islamophobic Football Lads gangs which launched in a short-lived blaze of fury last year, supposedly 'against' extremism but in reality quickly diverting into the anti-Muslim arena.

Dave Rogers, a former board member of the Dulwich Hamlet supporters trust, has helped organised trade union banner days at the club and friendly matches against the gay football team Stonewall FC. Rogers regularly joins delegations to other antifascist football supporters both here and abroad in what he describes as both an enlightening and educational experience.

"Football is resistance and it's nothing without football supporters. We could probably even teach John Motson a few things he will never have known." ■

A movement of towns and communities once more

The TUC General Secretary tells Joe Mulhall that there is huge potential for the trade union movement to help support the international struggle against fascism and racism

Frances O'Grady has been an active trade unionist and campaigner her entire working life. Today she's General Secretary of the TUC (Trades Union Congress), the first woman to ever hold the post and a role she stepped up to in 2013.

A tireless campaigner for workers' rights as well as being a brilliant campaigner against racism, she spoke with our senior researcher, Joe Mulhall, about the challenges lying ahead for the trade union movement – in particular tackling the fast-changing nature and threat emanating from the far right.

Joe: You've run tireless campaigns for workers' rights, as well as being a brilliant campaigner against racism and fascism. But when you look at the far right today, do you think there's a threat to the trade union movement?

Frances: "It's clearly a massive worry for the movement. You've got people who haven't had a pay rise for a decade. A million people waiting on council house waiting lists. Schools and hospitals under pressure; people feeling that the only jobs out there are zero hours or bogus self-employment jobs. Then you get charismatic, populist leaders coming along saying 'this is the fault of migrants' and you can see why that might gain traction."

"The trade union movement has a really important job to do to point out this is not the fault of migrants, this is the fault of a government that's imposed massive cuts on our services, and that has failed to tackle greedy bosses that have used that migrant labour to undercut pay rates. We have to point the finger of blame where it belongs."



Photo: Jess Hurd/
reportdigital.co.uk

**“
We've got
to become a
movement
of towns and
communities
once more.
”**

Joe: Economic pessimism plays into people's cultural concerns and it's something HOPE not hate has done a lot of work around. Are people *right* to feel angry at the moment?

Frances: "I think people are right to be angry: I feel angry! The real issue is who do we blame? There is a terrible truth in the fact that if you look at some of the wealthy backers who are supporting the far right, they ARE the Establishment! The idea that they are somehow anti-establishment or sticking up for blue collar workers is the biggest whopper going."

"But I think it's also more positively about people's sense of identity, pride and dignity. Trade unions have always been working class institutions that

give you a sense of pride. When you have a government that has attacked trade unions and made it more difficult for us to stick up for working people, that is an important part of the story."

Joe: We're also seeing a virulent misogyny and anti-feminist attitudes emerging.

Frances: "It feels to me as if hatred of women is a theme running through all this. But I'm also conscious that in countries like Germany the AfD [Alternative for Germany] is making a really big bid for women's support by talking about family, by pitching welfare cuts for ordinary families against financial support for asylum seekers. You can see the game they're playing. My concern

ns and more



is that appears to be getting some traction with some women."

Joe: How do we fight back against this misogyny?

Frances: "The worst thing we could do is to turn this into a competition around machismo. That's not the answer. It's important to have working class women as well as working class men leading the fightback."

Joe: There is a fightback happening. What about core economic remedies?

Frances: "It can't just be about pointing out what's wrong with them [the far right]. It has to be about offering hope, a platform for change and that kind of new deal we've been talking about,

that does deliver decent jobs and worker's rights but in the parts of the country that need it most. Often we're seen as a movement of cities, but we've got to become a movement of towns and communities once more.

"If we could raise the minimum wage, if we could raise the living wage – we've been arguing for £10 an hour – if we could crack down on zero hours, we could stop the sheer greed of those employers who are trying to use workers against each other... if we could build homes, if we could strengthen our communities, then there is hope we don't have to be this way. We can have a fairer Britain, with working people looking after each other.

"You look at some of our recent victories: the wonderful organising campaign at TGI Fridays, a huge multinational like McDonalds taken on by young workers, or the breakthrough we've had in Ryanair. Look at who those young working people are [doing this]. They're very diverse, from all walks of life: but by sticking together they're making a difference."

Joe: That's HOPE not hate!

Frances: "We've got lots to learn still. I'm not complacent. When I was going around factories and work places during the referendum, a lot of our reps did not feel confident taking on the arguments from the likes of UKIP. So there's a lot of work in education and training to help them have those 1-to-1 conversations in a way they don't do now. The TUC alone trains up 50,000 workplace reps each year alone, so we've got a massive resource there.

"We're part of a European and international movement, too, so we can match the far right in terms of our reach. We can find out what works best and draw strength from each other as part of an international movement."

Joe: So much of the threat is international, the far right is genuinely collaborating across borders. What do you think we might need to do in response – more demonstrations?

Frances: "I'm very clear that only having protests is not enough. Life has moved on. The far right has a capacity to tap into very big funds, to use social media, to mobilise

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”

big numbers... And there's deep-rooted discontent in our communities. There is long-term real work that needs to be done to stop the scapegoating of groups like migrants or Muslims.

"We have to do that tougher work, more patient work, in communities, and stand beside those communities when they are threatened. I'm very proud of our TUC officers when we've had mosques or synagogues threatened: even just getting together a bunch of people to stand outside [them] matters. It sends a signal, and that counts.

"But I also think we have to get more sophisticated, at the media level and in with social media in particular, and in our strategising about what we do. The trade union movement isn't what it was in the 1970s, or indeed in the 1930s. Our capacity is different. We need to do a lot of hard thinking about where we can contribute. We may be a trusted convenor, able to pull others together, but we have an international reach which I feel we could be using much more effectively in countering what the far right is doing."

Joe: Looking into the future – what are the threats?

Frances: "We are facing real disruption through Brexit; through growing inequality; and also through artificial intelligence, robots, and machine learning. We are seeing a lot of people really worried about their futures.

"But we have huge potential to come together as a movement and to change not just Britain, but beyond, for the good. The trade union movement is up for it and I believe many of our good friends and allies are up for that too. You know, it's one of those moments in history where we just have to keep on keeping on. It's tough and it's very often scary, but I feel that justice will win through."

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*Can I thank
HOPE not
hate for all
the fantastic
work that
you do.*
”

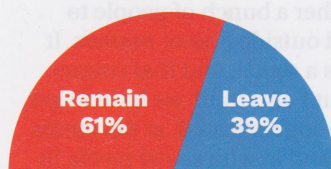
Joe: It's lovely to finish on a note that we're going to fight this one! Thank you so much for giving up your time.

Frances: "Can I thank HOPE not hate for all the fantastic work that you do. Here's to that friendship continuing, because you do amazing work! The trade union movement needs you. We don't thank you often enough – thank you." ■

What trade union members think

By Nick Lowles

How would you vote if another EU Referendum was held today?



TRADE UNION members are more opposed to Brexit, have more favourable attitudes to immigration and have more positive attitudes to Muslims than their non-union colleagues and, indeed, with society at large.

That is the findings of our recent polling, which included questioning almost 1,300 union members.

Health is the most issue facing union members, followed by Britain leaving the EU and the economy. Interestingly, only 15% of union members selected immigration as one of their key three issues, compared to 18% in society as a whole, while 23% picked pensions, considerably more than the 18% nationally.

As the TUC meets to decide its policy on Brexit, delegates might be interested to hear that Union members are considerably more supportive of the EU and more strongly opposed to Brexit than society as a whole.

Sixty-one per cent of union members would vote to Remain in the EU if there was another Referendum, compared to 53% generally. Half of union members think the British public should have a vote on the Government's agreed terms of exit from the EU, with 37% disagreeing and 14% undecided.

Union members overwhelmingly believe that leaving the EU without a

Once the Brexit negotiations are complete and the terms of Britain's exit from the EU have been agreed, do you think there should or should not be a referendum to accept or reject them?



deal would be bad for Britain and just 13% have faith that Theresa May and her Government can deliver a good Brexit. Over two-thirds of union members think Brexit has left Britain more divided and has fed prejudice and division, and 60% worry that NHS funding will be adversely affected by leaving the EU. Only 22% of union members think that their own economic situation will improve with Brexit, less than the national average.

Union members believe that the economic prospects for themselves, their communities and the country as a whole are better served by remaining in the EU, rather than outside the EU. The same goes for the NHS, tackling terrorism, investment and providing opportunities for their children growing up today.

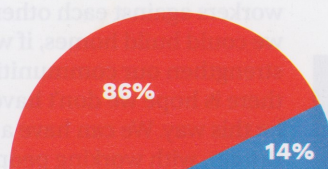
While union members are more supportive of remaining in the EU, they also strongly believe that it has become a distraction from other issues. Three-quarters of union members think Brexit is taking up all the attention of politicians at the expense of tackling the real issues facing the UK.

77% of union members agree that leaving the EU is more complicated and difficult than they imagined.

By a margin of five to one, union members think that leaving the EU should be

Our approach to leaving the EU should be guided by what is best for the British economy **86%**

Our approach to leaving the EU should be guided by reducing immigration **14%**



guided by what is best for the British economy, rather than by reducing immigration.

On immigration, 69% of union members think immigration has been good for the country, while a similar number of people (68%) think having a wide of backgrounds and cultures is part of British culture. Even union members' attitudes towards British Muslims and Islam are more favourable

Would leaving the EU without an agreed deal be good or bad for Britain?



than society as a whole.

Many unions are worried about being too vocal in their opposition to Brexit. Hopefully understanding the views of their members will hopefully help them in their decisions.

Do you think that each of the following will be better if the UK remains in the EU, or if the UK leaves the EU, or do you not think it doesn't makes much difference either way?

Total
Trade union members

ECONOMIC PROSPECTS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

Better if the UK Remains in the EU	35	49
Better if the UK Leaves the EU	23	19
It doesn't make too much difference either way	24	22
Don't know	18	10

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN GROWING UP TODAY

Better if the UK Remains in the EU	39	52
Better if the UK Leaves the EU	27	23
It doesn't make too much difference either way	18	17
Don't know	17	9

THE NHS

Better if the UK Remains in the EU	31	45
Better if the UK Leaves the EU	34	31
It doesn't make too much difference either way	19	15
Don't know	17	9

BRITISH INDUSTRY

Better if the UK Remains in the EU	36	51
Better if the UK Leaves the EU	34	30
It doesn't make too much difference either way	13	10
Don't know	17	9

150
YEARS
1868-2018

TUC

Changing the world
of work for good

Messages of solidarity from Britain's trade union movement



"The trade union movement and the very values we were built on stand in direct opposition to the division and hatred of the far right. In Brexit and the rise of Trump we see writ large the frustration of many working class people and the desperate need for change. We cannot allow the far right to exploit insecurity and the desperation caused by continued austerity to scapegoat, blame and divide our communities. Hope Not Hate do vital work organising in all spheres of life to challenge the far right in a way that working people and communities understand. That's hugely important and something GMB Union will continue to support."

TIM ROACHE, General Secretary GMB

"At a time when the far-right is on the rise and fundamental liberties are at stake, it takes the brave to confront these challenges. There can be no fear on the front line and that is why we support the tremendous, brave and inspiring work of HOPE not hate in challenging racism and fascism. We are proud to call them friends and comrades."

STEVE CAVALIER, Chief Exec Thompsons Solicitors



"Unite is proud to be able to count on the friendship and expertise of Hope Not Hate when it comes to our work to drive hatred from our communities and address the concerns and fears of those attracted by the opportunistic messaging of the far right. The far right has always sought to destroy trade unions because we are a force for hope, for positive collective action. Working with HNH, alongside other anti-racist groups, we become even stronger – and pose an even greater threat to the forces of division and fear who have no place in our society."

"Unite has always made clear that the far right has no answers to the genuine problems that our communities face. Working together we can deliver the sort of changes we need for a fairer, more equal society, instilling hope and opportunity in place of fear and despair."

STEVE TURNER, Assistant General Secretary Unite



"The far right are a growing menace in Britain today. Bolstered by support from a global network of agitators, and dangerous rhetoric from the likes of Donald Trump, they are taking their hate-filled messages to the streets of Britain."

"Everyone should get behind Hope not Hate. They play a vital role in exposing the activities of the far right and helped to foil the plot to murder Rosie Cooper MP."

"We need their tireless campaigning and work with communities now more than ever."

FRANCES O'GRADY, General Secretary TUC



"HOPE not hate saves lives. Without their dedication and professionalism you can rest assured we would be in a far darker place. There can be no hiding place for racists and fascists in our society and that is why we support our friends and colleagues at HOPE not hate."

MICK WHELAN, General Secretary ASLEF



"UNISON is proud to continue working with the HOPE not Hate campaign, bringing our communities together in the face of those who seek to divide us."

DAVE PRENTIS, General Secretary, Unison



"It's becoming increasingly clear that Brexit is the alt-right's baby. Our union firmly rejected the xenophobia and at times racism spread by the Leave campaign during the referendum."

Our union will not be bystanders, and that's why we support the tremendous work of Hope not Hate. Their investigative work has saved the life of an MP, and exposed far right plots, they have built a movement in communities to beat the BNP, and taken UKIP head on, and online their fight continues against the extremist haters wherever they may be."

Together with Hope not Hate we will get stuck in to sink the alt-right's Brexit battleship."

MANUEL CORTES, General Secretary TSSA



HNH & GMB present:

BILLY BRAGG

+ {^{the}wakes}

25th January 2019

**ULU Live at
Student Central,
London**

A benefit for the
anti racist and antifascist
organisation HOPE not hate.

GMB

GMB@WORK



oneills



**HATE
HOPE**